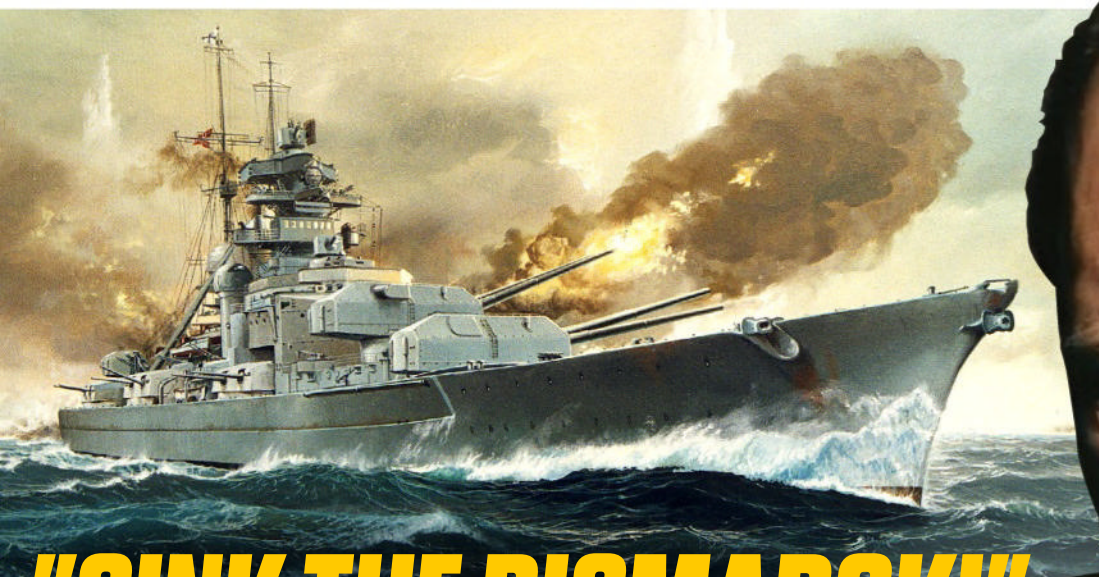
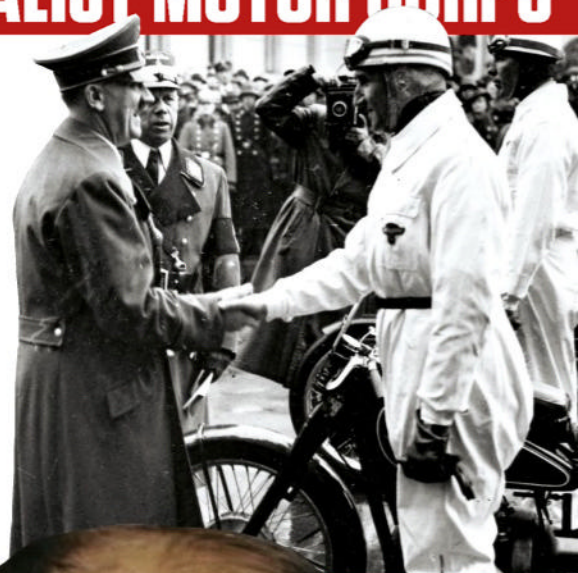


ARYAN RACERS: HITLER'S NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOTOR CORPS

HISTORY *of* WAR



"SINK THE BISMARCK!"

CHURCHILL'S REVENGE

How the loss of HMS Hood triggered a desperate hunt for the Nazi battleship



**NAPOLEON'S
FIRST
VICTORY**
Siege of Toulon

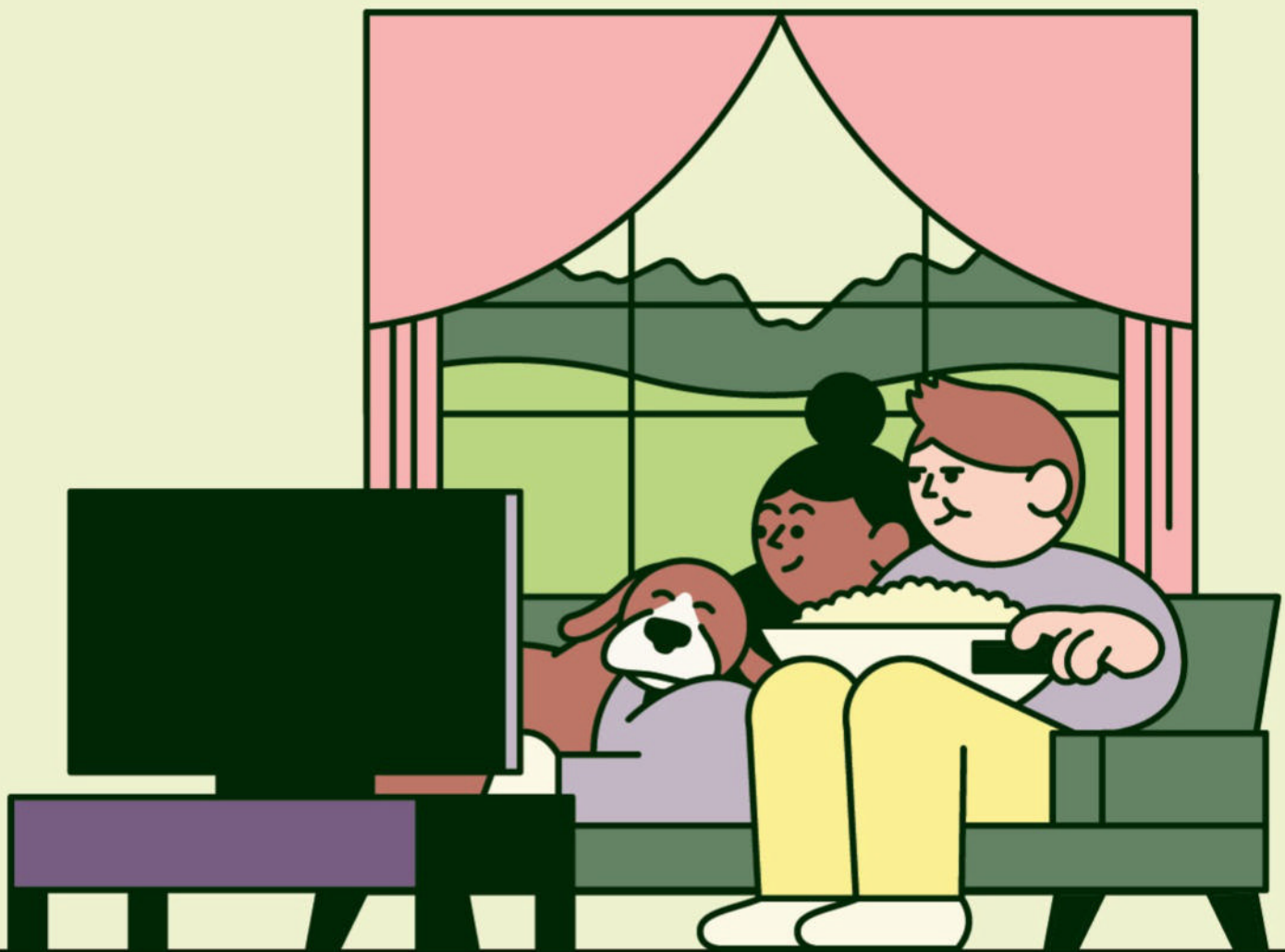
BATTLE FOR ATHENS
Opening shots of Greece's
devastating civil war

FAIREY SWORDFISH
Inside the Royal Navy's
trustworthy torpedo bomber



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**SCAN TO GET
OUR WEEKLY
NEWSLETTER**



Above: HMS Dorsetshire
picks up survivors from
Bismarck after its sinking



Above: Bismarck's size,
speed and armament
made it a unique threat

CONTRIBUTORS



PROF. NICK LLOYD

The First World War's Eastern Front endures as an intriguing topic, unfamiliar to many in the West brought up learning about largely static trench warfare. On page 34, Nick discusses the origins, features and unique characteristics of this theatre – the topic of his new book.



STUART HADAWAY

RAF researcher and historian Stuart returns, this issue looking inside the Fairey Swordfish, Britain's beloved biplane torpedo bomber that stalked the seas, guarded naval convoys and took part in the final destruction of the Bismarck in 1941 (p64).



DUNCAN EVANS

The National Socialist Motor Corps was founded in the early 1930s as group for developing driving knowledge, skills and speed. Later its members became part of the Nazi war machine as tank drivers, despatch riders, logistics and elsewhere. Read more on page 58.

Welcome

The sinking of HMS Hood in May 1941 was a disaster for Britain – all but three of the 1,418 crew went down with the Royal Navy's prized battlecruiser, along with the nation's perceived dominance at sea. Hood was reportedly thwarted by a lucky hit from Bismarck, Germany's largest battleship, which was left at large in the Atlantic. Churchill's response was to launch an immediate hunt to sink Bismarck "at all costs", deploying squadrons by sea and air for the operation. The strategic priority of preventing Bismarck's substantial gunnery from attacking Allied shipping was no less vital than the need to restore dented pride in the navy, as well as public morale.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

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**TURN TO
PAGE 44**



'SINK THE BISMARCK!' CHURCHILL'S REVENGE

24 How the shock sinking of HMS Hood triggered a desperate hunt for Nazi Germany's flagship

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History of Hitler's National Socialist Motor Corps

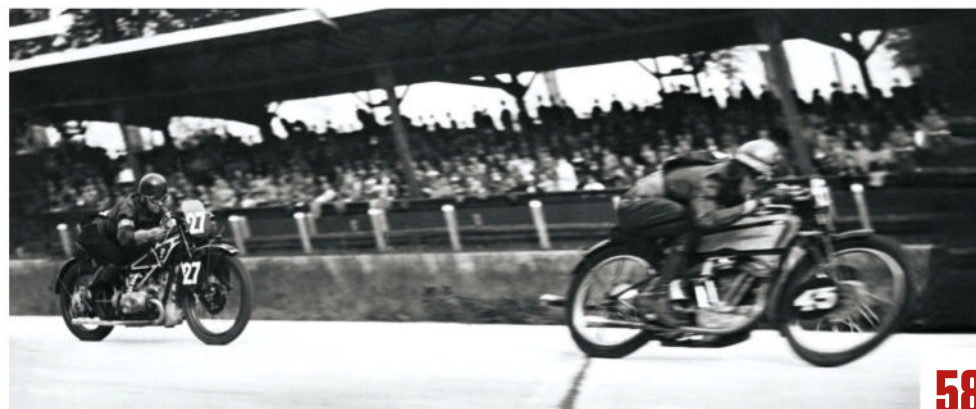
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Inside the trusted torpedo bomber that stalked the oceans of the Second World War



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A Henschel HS 293 anti-ship missile



WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

LAI D TO REST

26 November 1982

At Aldershot Military Cemetery, Paratrooper pallbearers stand next to the flag-draped coffins of 16 soldiers from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Parachute Regiment, killed during the Falklands War. The cemetery is the resting place of 17,000 service personnel from nine nations who died in combat, including 692 from the Great War and 129 from the Second World War. One of the most noteworthy Falklands graves at the cemetery is that of Sergeant Ian McKay, who was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for charging an enemy machine gun position during the Battle of Mount Longdon.





WAR_{in} **FOCUS** **OPÉRATION DAGUET**

30 August 1990

Soldiers of the French 1st Parachute Hussar work on a machine gun in the United Arab Emirates desert as part of Opération Daguet, France's contribution to the Gulf War. France deployed 18,000 troops – the second-largest European contingent. They were tasked with capturing Al Salman Air Base, located 90 miles (140km) inside Iraqi territory. The French force achieved its objective within 48 hours, crushing the Iraqi 45th Mechanised Infantry Division that opposed them. They then continued to push north and secured the highways connecting Baghdad to southern Iraq.







WAR_{in} **FOCUS**

BORNEO ROCKET BARRAGE

1 May 1945

A US Navy rocket-firing landing craft unleashes a strike during the Battle of Tarakan, Borneo, while carrying Australian infantrymen. Billowing clouds of smoke indicate the ferocity of the fighting as Allied forces attempt to capture the airfield from the Japanese. It was needed to provide air cover in later operations in Brunei, Labuan and Balikpapan. However, Allied bombardments heavily damaged the airstrip and it took eight weeks to be repaired. As a result of the damage, Allied aircraft were unable to use Tarakan to carry out their planned role in later phases of the Borneo campaign.

TIMELINE OF THE

GREEK CIVIL WAR

As most of Europe celebrates peace after, Greece descends into a bitter internal conflict, with political control of the country fought over in the streets and hills

October 1944

LIBERATION FROM AXIS OCCUPATION

While exiled for over three years in Egypt, the Greek government has little capability to influence affairs back home. Instead, multiple resistance movements, including communist and monarchist affiliated groups, play a quasi-governmental role in people's everyday lives. After German forces withdraw in the face of the advancing Red Army, the Greek government is able to return, though left-leaning resistance groups control 90 percent of the country.



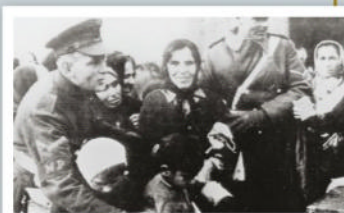
Prime minister of the new Greek government Georgios Papandreou parades through the liberated city of Patras with officers of the Greek resistance

November-December 1944

ESCALATING TENSIONS

A force of 6,000 British troops arrives in Athens to keep order alongside police units that collaborated with the Germans. Resistance groups are angered by an order to disarm by 10 November. Resistance representatives resign from the Government of National Unity and the Greek Communist Party (KKE) establishes an office opposite the Greek police headquarters on Syntagma Square, drawing the battle lines.

British military police officers help children to receive rations following starvation under Axis occupation



3 December 1944

MARCH ON SYNTAGMA SQUARE

A general strike begins in Athens and thousands of protestors march towards Syntagma Square. Attempts to stop them before they reach the square are unsuccessful and violence erupts when they pass the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in front of the Royal Palace. It is still debated whether the police or the protestors open fire first. During the fighting 28 demonstrators are killed and the 37-day Dekemvriana Events begin.

Paratroopers from 5th (Scots) Parachute Battalion, 2nd Parachute Brigade, fire a Vickers machine gun from a rooftop during the Dekemvriana Events

DEKEMVRIANA EVENTS 01

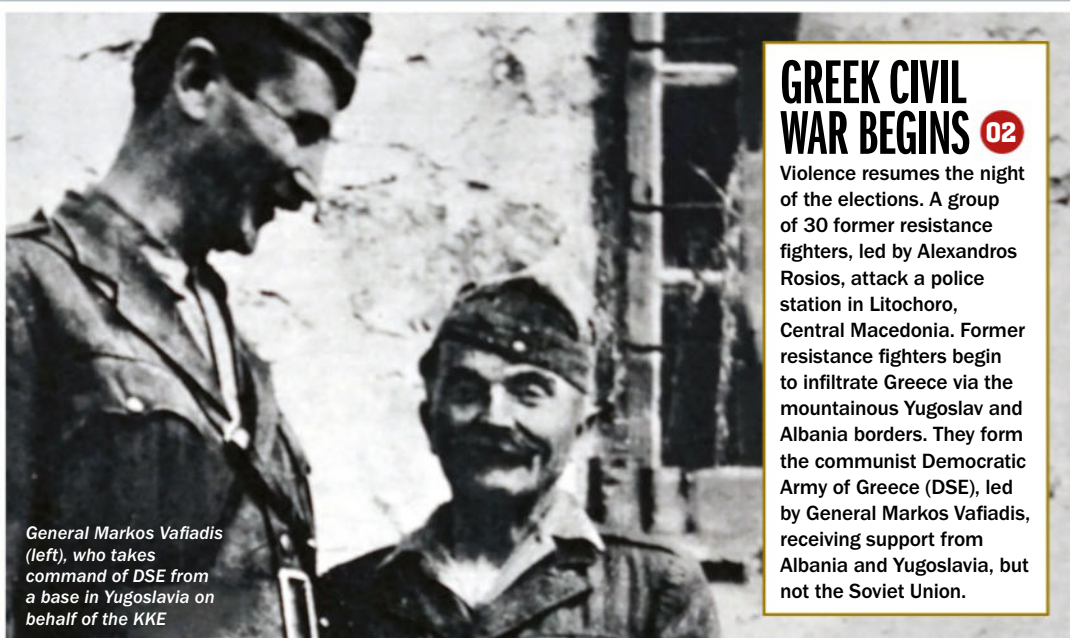
Winston Churchill orders British troops to intervene, stating: "We have to hold and dominate Athens." It takes three weeks for the British to gain the upper hand. Meanwhile, the Greek government falls apart, delaying the return of King George II, while the anti-communist General Nikolaos Plastiras becomes the new prime minister.

Truman addresses a joint session of Congress to ask for \$400 million of aid for Greece and Turkey



US AID ESTABLISHED

The Kingdom of Greece begins to receive aid from the US as part of the Truman Doctrine, which pledges to protect independent countries from Soviet expansion. Aiming to sustain Greece and Turkey as a buffer zone in the Mediterranean, the US provides economic and military assistance to counter the communist threat.



General Markos Vafiadis (left), who takes command of DSE from a base in Yugoslavia on behalf of the KKE

GREEK CIVIL WAR BEGINS 02

Violence resumes the night of the elections. A group of 30 former resistance fighters, led by Alexandros Rosios, attack a police station in Litochoro, Central Macedonia. Former resistance fighters begin to infiltrate Greece via the mountainous Yugoslav and Albania borders. They form the communist Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), led by General Markos Vafiadis, receiving support from Albania and Yugoslavia, but not the Soviet Union.

3 December 1944 – 11 January 1945

12 February 1945 – March 1946

31 March 1946

Late 1946

March 1947

TREATY OF VARKIZA AND A VIOLENT INTERLUDE

A month after the Dekemvriana Events, a peace treaty is signed. It requires the disarmament of all militant groups in return for a referendum on the monarchy and a general election. However, violence continues as anti-communist forces retaliate against the now-defenceless former resistance fighters. The KKE decides to switch back to a militant footing in February 1946 and boycott the elections.



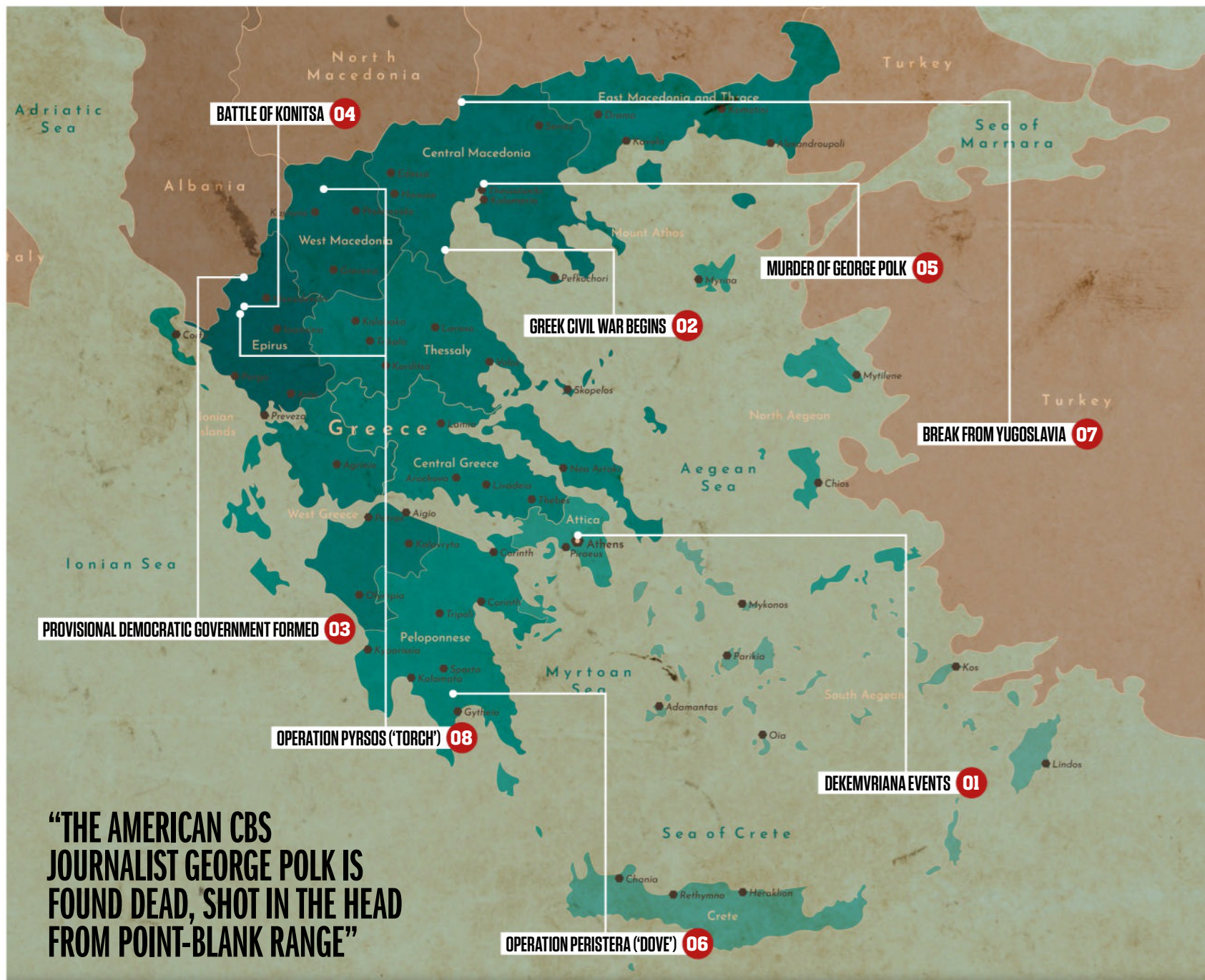
Despite a left-wing boycott, right-wing Greeks continue election preparations as normal. Here, a priest blesses a new headquarters for the conservative National Party

COMMUNIST RANKS SWELL

DSE ranks grow to around 16,000 partisans. These forces are predominantly massed in the north, but there is also a significant Peloponnese contingent in the south led by Vangelis Rogakos. The fighters on the peninsula number between 1,000 and 5,000.

A female DSE fighter trains with a Sten gun





“THE AMERICAN CBS JOURNALIST GEORGE POLK IS FOUND DEAD, SHOT IN THE HEAD FROM POINT-BLANK RANGE”

24 December 1947



The cave shelter in Grammos used for war councils of the Provisional Democratic Government

PROVISIONAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT FORMED 03

The DSE gains control of mountainous regions on the border of Yugoslavia and Albania. Having previously declared a ‘Mountain Government’ of these territories during the Second World War, it creates the Provisional Democratic Government (PDG), separate from Athenian rule.

December 1947

BATTLE OF KONITSA 04

In attempting to establish a permanent capital for the PDG, the DSE attacks the small town Konitsa. They hope that successfully seizing it will lead to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc states formally recognising the PDG. The DSE launches repeated attacks, using Albania as a base, but is unsuccessful in gaining control of the town.



A Greek postage stamp printed in 1947 shows the iconic stone Konitsa bridge, constructed in 1870

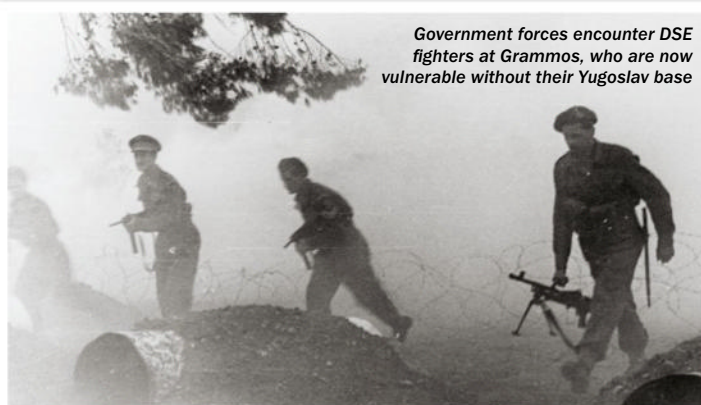
15 May 1948

MURDER OF GEORGE POLK 05

The American CBS journalist George Polk is found dead, shot in the head from point-blank range. Polk was in Greece to secure an interview with Vafiadis. Two communists are charged with his murder, while others allege anti-communists arranged the assassination to stop his reporting of government corruption.

George Polk's body, showing he was bound and blindfolded before being shot





Government forces encounter DSE fighters at Grammos, who are now vulnerable without their Yugoslav base

BREAK FROM YUGOSLAVIA 07

Tito decides to shut the Yugoslav border to the DSE and close their camps inside Yugoslavia. The DSE can now only use the Albanian border to seek refuge and becomes vulnerable to being cut off. Anger grows at Tito and a hunt for suspected 'Titoites' within the DSE ranks begins.



OPERATION PERISTERA ('DOVE') 06

The central and southern regions of the Peloponnese peninsula came under communist control in late 1947, making it inaccessible to the government. However, communist forces on the peninsula are isolated from the main communist force in the mountainous north of Greece and cannot hold out against government attacks.

A Greek soldier during the operation against communists



Punishment cells in Gyaros prison. The jail remained in use until 1976 and held dissidents, journalists and members of the LGBT community

COMMUNIST DEFEAT

The Greek communist broadcasting station announces the end of the Greek Civil War. With the DSE defeated, a new political consensus forms, divided between right, centre and left-wing groups. Meanwhile, thousands of communist fighters and sympathisers are internally exiled: 20,000 are sent to the uninhabited island of Gyaros, which is dubbed the 'Dachau of the Mediterranean'. The civil war continues to divide Greece. In a 2008 Greek Gallup poll, just 43 percent think that the outcome of the war was best for Greece.

June 1948

December 1948 – April 1949

July 1949

2-30 August 1949

16 October 1949

COMMUNIST SPLIT

In June 1948, the Soviet Union breaks off relations with Yugoslavia and Joseph Stalin states his opposition to the DSE uprising. He believes the US and Britain will never allow Greece to become communist because their lines of communication in the Mediterranean would be broken. The KKE also suffers a split between those loyal to Vafiadis and Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito, and the pro-Soviets.



KKE general secretary and leader of the pro-Soviet faction Nikos Zachariadis

Greek government commandos use US equipment to begin their assault on guerrillas entrenched at Vitsi



OPERATION PYRSOS ('TORCH') 08

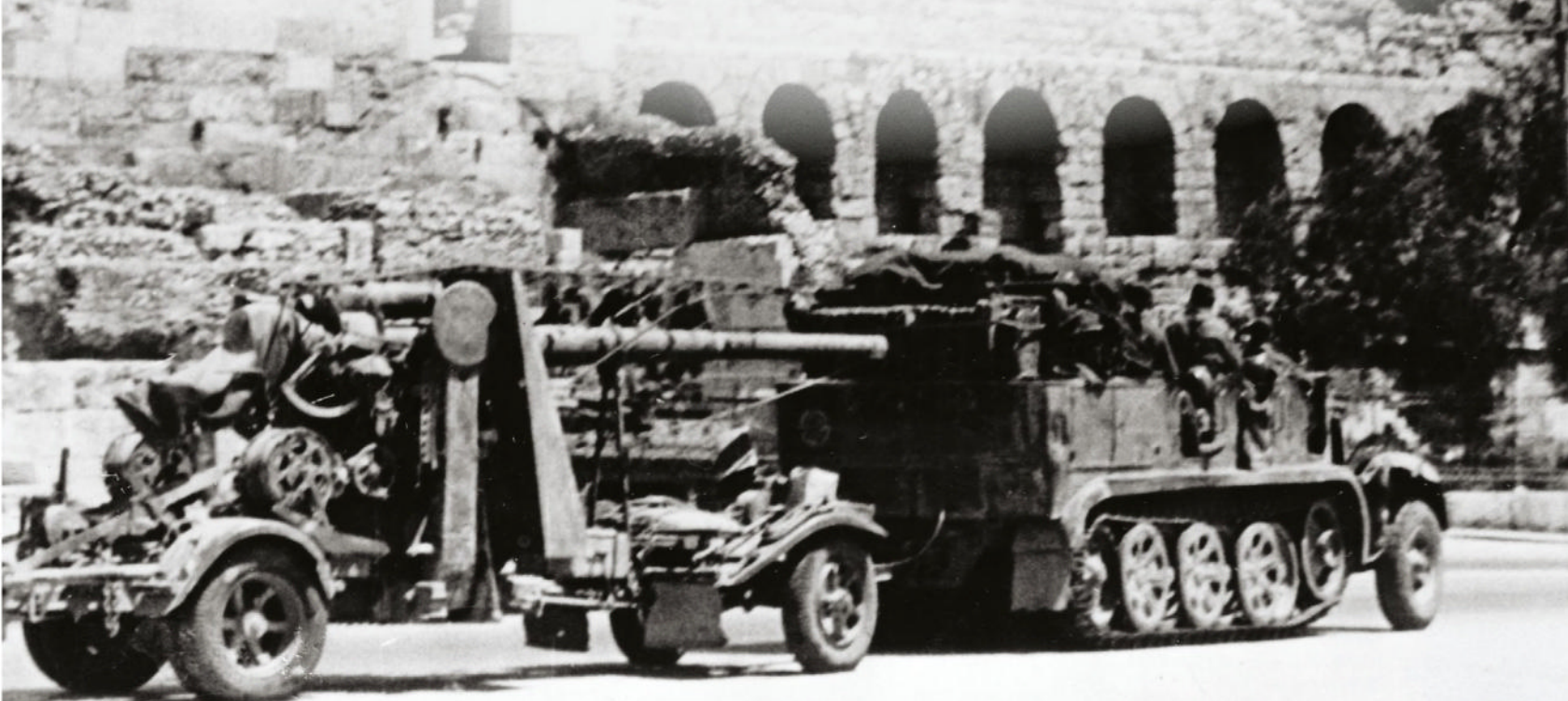
The government's army launches its final campaign against communist forces to destroy their last remaining strongholds in Grammos and Vitsi. The operation begins with diversionary attacks in Grammos, gaining ground there for six days and diverting Vafiadis' attention. Government forces then switch their focus to Vitsi with artillery and air support. They successfully capture Vitsi and cut off the guerrillas' escape to Albania.

Images © Alamy, Getty

*Nazi soldiers beginning
their occupation of
Athens in May 1941*

OCCUPATION, RESISTANCE & LIBERATION

Capturing Greece was key to helping the Axis powers fulfil their wider strategy, but they underestimated the indomitable spirit of the Greeks to fight back



As conflict erupted in Europe with the outbreak of the Second World War, Greece's prime minister, right-wing strongman Ioannis Metaxas, was faced with the dilemma of whether to involve his country or stay out of the fight. He opted to steer the Greeks down the path of armed neutrality, determined to protect the Greek population and territory.

Metaxas was concerned about aggressive overtures from the Kingdom of Bulgaria, as its Tsar Boris III and Prime Minister Bogdan Filov started closely aligning with the Axis powers. He was also concerned by Benito Mussolini and Italy's ambitions in the Balkans, and believed that allying with any side in the war would mean Greece would either lose its arms to Bulgaria and Italy or its legs to Britain.

However, all that changed from October 1940, after what Metaxas called "the unjust attack" by Italy. He saw that it was best to side with Britain, declaring that "time is not in favour of the Axis" and that "the war was lost to the Axis the moment England declared: 'We will fight until we are victorious.'"

By early 1941 the Italian assault on Greece was failing, and Mussolini's forces had been

pushed into Albania. By the spring of 1941 Hitler had grown tired of his ally's inability to conquer the country quickly, and was seeking to secure the region in order to protect German resources, support its African campaign and undermine Britain's lines of communications with its forces in the east. The Germans launched a blitzkrieg offensive into Greece through Nazi-controlled Yugoslavia and new Axis member Bulgaria. Britain, seeing the threat to its war effort, poured over 50,000 Commonwealth troops into Greece to stop the German advance, but this was to no avail and Athens fell on 27 April 1941, beginning the Axis occupation of Greece. With this defeat, the bulk of the Greek and British Forces, the Greek government and royal family withdrew to Crete and then Cairo once the Axis powers had established their occupation over the entire country and its islands.

The Axis powers split Greece between Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and the newly created puppet government, an arrangement that was only altered two years later after Italy's own split and its surrender to the Allies. During the occupation, the Axis powers unleashed a system of terror on Greece, extracted its natural resources to fuel their war efforts, plunged its economy into turmoil, drove thousands into poverty and lumbered Greece with the cost of occupation and forced 'war loans' to be paid to the Third Reich.

A minority collaborated but many Greeks instead followed the ideas espoused by Metaxas and King Constantine of protecting Greece's territorial sovereignty and people. The main groups that emerged and led the resistance, often supported and funded by the Allies, were the communist-backed National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military organisation the National People's Liberation Army (ELAS), the right-wing National Republican Greek League (EDES) and the royalist National Social Liberation

(EKKA). Many former Greek Army members were in these groups, providing them with valuable military experience and knowledge.

The mountainous but also largely coastal geography of Greece presented a number of key infrastructure targets, such as bridges, which the resistance movements could attack to disrupt Axis operations. These factors, combined with the military experience of the Greek resistance, created the perfect conditions for guerrilla warfare, and the resistance used these rural and mountainous areas to base their guerrilla militant units and launch their attacks.

The destruction of the Gorgopotamos viaduct in November 1942 and the Asopos railway bridge in June 1943 were two major attacks that helped put additional stress on the occupiers' resources and vulnerable infrastructure. In urban areas, resistance groups used their influence and popularity to covertly transport resources to the needy across the country through existing Axis-controlled transport networks. They also undermined newly imposed taxes and levies and organised mass protests and strikes which toppled the puppet government. This urban activity was just as important as guerrilla warfare in forcing the eventual withdrawal of the Germans.

The resistance received significant support from the British, who recognised the need for a post-war non-communist Greece. However, this anti-communist view exacerbated political divisions, and the right-wing EDES entered a truce with the Germans from October 1943 to July 1944 in order to attack the communists. This ended as the German forces grew weaker and after the British forced the two factions to sign a ceasefire. By the summer of 1944, the Nazis were seeing their southern European and Balkan allies grow weaker or capitulate, and the cost of occupying Greece no longer appeared feasible – by October 1944 they had withdrawn.



Images: Alamy

Left: Ioannis Metaxas, the strongman dictator who inspired Greek resistance to the Nazis

Above: Italian troops pictured at the Acropolis during the Axis occupation of Greece, 1942

DEKEMVRIANA: BATTLE OF ATHENS

Only six weeks after the departure of the Axis occupiers,
Greece erupted in a bloody internal conflict

The power vacuum left in the wake of the Axis retreat in 1944 was immediately contested by two major political and military groups. One party claiming power was the communist National Liberation Front (EAM) supported by its military organisation the National People's Liberation Army (ELAS). The EAM had previously been closely supported by the British during the Nazi occupation.

Opposing the communists was Georgios Papandreou's exiled Greek government, under the guidance of the British. In the aftermath of the Nazi withdrawal, the EAM was instructed by the Soviets to not take full control of Greece, although it very easily could have, as it would have interfered with Stalin's post-war plans, and it would have contravened Stalin and Churchill's agreement that Greece fell within Britain's sphere of influence.

Britain, on the other hand, had moved its support away from the EAM, its previous partners in the resistance, to the government-in-exile that was backed by the National Republican Greek League (EDES). The changing nature of international support in the prelude to the civil war only exacerbated tensions. The two parties who were previously united in a power-sharing agreement and their goal to create a strong and territorially secure Greece began to fall out over how a new military should be organised, and how the old resistance should be demilitarised. Papandreou, the Greek prime minister, rejected the EAM's requests, and with an agreement appearing far off General Ronald Scobie, the commander of the British forces in Greece, demanded on 1 December 1944 that ELAS surrender its weapons.

On 3 December 1944, 250,000 left-wing, demonstrators sympathetic to EAM took part in a protest in Athens against British post-liberation actions such as installing former Nazi collaborators as police officers and violating the Caserta Agreement, which had been signed by the exiled government, the British, EAM/ELAS and EDES in September 1944 to outline how the new Greece would be governed.

During this demonstration, the protestors proclaimed their appreciation for the Allies' unwavering support in their fight against their Axis occupiers. Cries of "Viva Churchill, Viva Roosevelt, Viva Stalin" echoed around Athens, accompanied by people waving British, American, Soviet and Greek flags. However, this demonstration, deemed illegal, was heading towards Papandreou's residence, creating chaos in Athens and threatening



Athens police fire shots at the demonstrators during the Dekemvriana



The violence in Athens claimed the lives of 28 people and injured many more

the police. Suddenly, a chorus of gunfire from British and Greek government forces rang out, killing 28, mainly young people, and injuring hundreds more. This bloodbath helped ignite the civil war that had been brewing throughout the Nazi's occupation of Greece, and began the events now known as the Dekemvriana – a series of violent clashes during December and early January.

In response to the bloodshed, Papandreou tried to resign as prime minister, but he was convinced to stay on by the British. Officials in London were desperate to control

the volatile situation, and General Scobie declared martial law, demanding that ELAS leave Athens the next day. His demand was rejected, and ELAS fighters took control of police stations across the city. Using their initial superiority, ELAS was quickly able to capture Athens by 12 December.

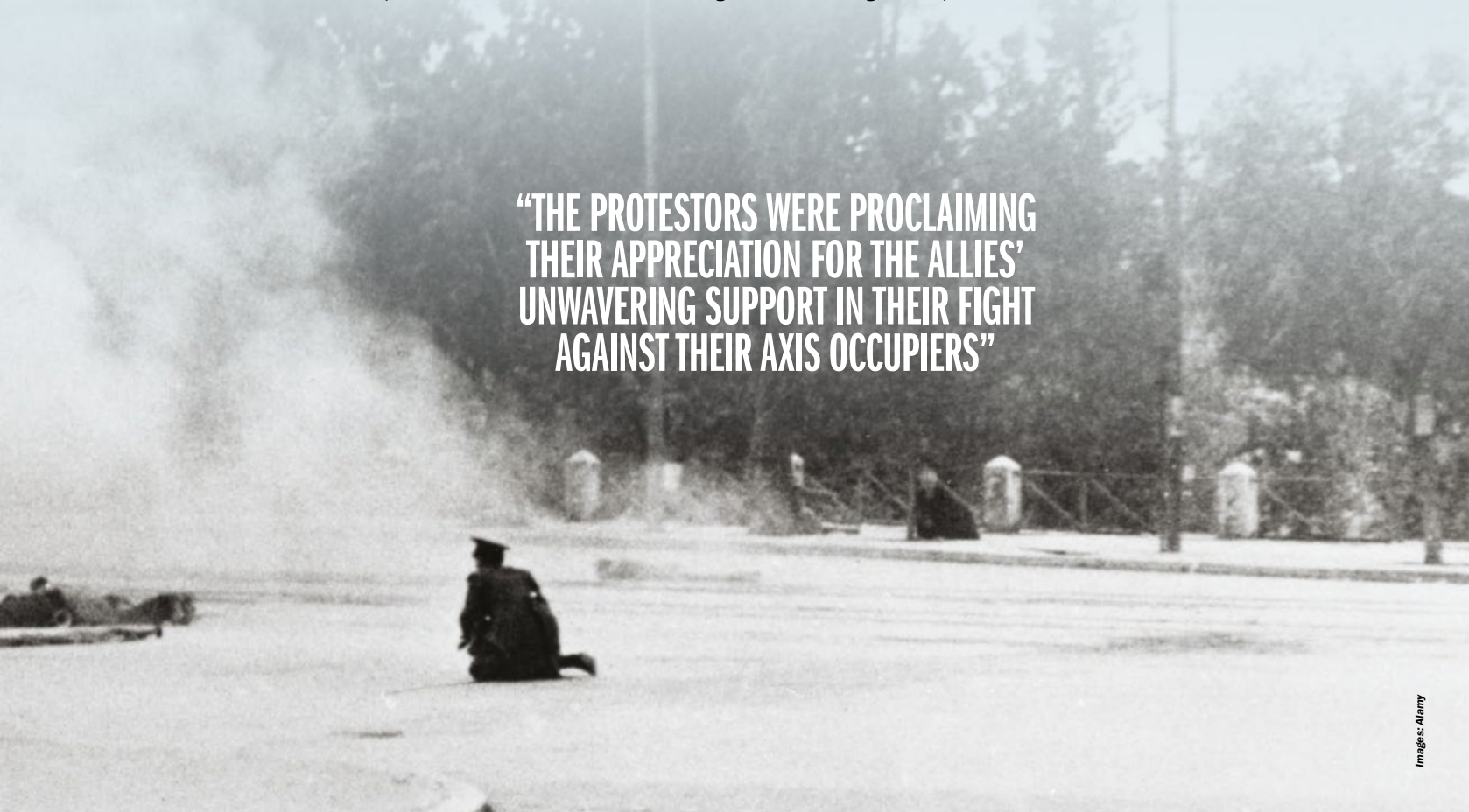
During the period that ELAS controlled Athens, its members committed several atrocities across Greece including the execution of 8,000 people for 'political crimes' against EAM, beatings and forced marches. Fearing that Greece might collapse

to communism, dealing a devastating blow to the Allies' post-war plans for the region, the British government dispatched the 4th Infantry Division from Italy to Athens and authorised air support for the recapture of the city. Churchill also demanded Scobie "neutralise all groups... that will approach the city". Throughout December, as more ELAS forces began to join the conflict in support of their comrades in Athens, battle-hardened British soldiers and tanks aided by artillery and air attacks moved through Athens' streets and alleyways neutralising any ELAS and EAM threats.

By late December 1944, Churchill believed that the civil war could only be resolved politically and was determined to end the conflict by Christmas Day 1944, arriving in Athens on Christmas Eve in an attempt to broker a peace agreement. However, his efforts came to up short due to excessive demands from ELAS, the deliberately unclear position of Stalin and the USSR, and the lack of Soviet support for ELAS due to Churchill and Stalin's agreement regarding post-war spheres of influence.

This failure led Churchill seek a different solution: King George III was forced to install a regent, Papandreou resigned as leader and was replaced with the anti-communist Nikolaos Plastiras, and a fresh British offensive was launched on 3 January 1945. The assault successfully removed ELAS from Athens, forcing it to eventually sign the Varkiza Agreement on 12 February 1945. This outlined that ELAS and all other EAM military units would be demobilised to pave the way for a new national army, effectively defeating the EAM and ELAS both politically and militarily.

**"THE PROTESTORS WERE PROCLAIMING
THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE ALLIES'
UNWAVERING SUPPORT IN THEIR FIGHT
AGAINST THEIR AXIS OCCUPIERS"**



Frontline

RED & WHITE TERROR

After the Varkiza Agreement the two sides, driven by ideological fervour and mutual enmity, stop at nothing to eradicate the other



*'Re-educated' communists
being trained to fight
against the DSE at
Makronissos Island*

Fresh from the embarrassment of the Varkiza Agreement, and the disbanding of ELAS, many communists who still believed in the goal of a communist Greece retreated to the EAM and ELAS strongholds in the Greek mountains. Without a centralising force, there was little sense of organisation in communist resistance post-Dekemvriana. After those bloody events, and with a new prime minister in London, the British also scaled back their involvement in Greece, continuing to hold Athens in support of the government but refusing to intervene elsewhere. This led to the wider conflict being waged by the Athens government upon the remaining guerrilla communist groups.

The remaining communists, their guerrilla bands and former ELAS members, with the support of neighbouring communist nations Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, reformed the ELAS, which had been disbanded in accordance with the Varkiza Agreement. Meanwhile, the Greek government reformed its army, paving the way for the two forces that would largely define and fight throughout the upcoming hostilities. Additionally, the right-wing victory in the 1946 Greek elections, which the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) boycotted, provided the government with a level of national and international legitimacy and approval.

The government that came into power, and institutions of authority such as the Greek Orthodox Church (which was slowly recovering after the Second World War) were following the anti-communist direction set for them by the British, with the staunchly anti-communist Nikolaos Plastiras becoming Greece's new prime minister. This led to many government and civil servant positions being filled with anti-communists who were also former Nazi collaborators – Greece eventually had more collaborators in positions of power

than anywhere else in post-war Europe. The pervasion of collaborators and anti-communists throughout the government and civil service institutionalised the anti-communist policies that preceded the 'White Terror'.

The White Terror was a policy of political oppression and violence endorsed and carried out by the Athens government, supported by right-wing extremists, to suppress leftists and destroy the leftist threat to their power. During this period, anyone with ties to EAM, ELAS or DSE during the Dekemvriana was targeted for removal to one of the Greek Islands' prisons on either Gyaros, Makronisos or Ai Stratis. Many of those affiliated with the resistance were also murdered, such as former EAM member Giorgos Kostakis, who was killed in his house alongside his three-year-old daughter and 16-year-old son in May 1946.

Once removed to the island prisons, political inmates underwent a 're-education' programme that sought to turn them into 'true Greeks' who supported the government. However there were also reports of torture, forced labour, rape, ritualistic humiliation and execution at these facilities. Conditions on these island prisons were horrific, inmates were forced to carry out construction work on the facilities and were regularly beaten while doing so. Victims who were executed were often decapitated. Such was the brutality that the island prison on Gyaros was known as the 'Dachau of the

Mediterranean'. Both on these islands and elsewhere the Greek military, supported by British forces, used interrogation methods such as electrocution and hanging. The events of the White Terror are considered among the worst post-war atrocities in Europe.

However, the communists and the DSE were far from innocent themselves when it came to the brutal treatment of their enemies. Throughout this second part of the civil war, they conducted their own 'Red Terror'. In border territories, over 20,000 Greek children were removed into neighbouring communist nations as a 'humanitarian act'. When they arrived, they were placed into forced-labour children's villages to create hardened communist soldiers who would fight for Greece. However, only 684 children eventually returned to their homeland – the rest were dead or missing.

The DSE would also assassinate suspected former collaborators and take hostages to strengthen its hand in negotiations with the government. The actions of the DSE, and the strength of anti-communist propaganda, made them deeply unpopular and undermined the good faith they had built during the resistance to Axis occupation. The increasing tensions and polarisation of politics in Greece also led the KKE to call for the implementation of a Soviet-style communist system, the dismantling of the Greek Orthodox Church and the execution of former collaborators.

The reduction of the British role in Greece after Clement Attlee became prime minister led to the Greek government seeking additional assistance from America, and in March 1947 President Harry S Truman approved American intervention in Greece. The US Military Advisory and Planning Group, following the new Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment, refused to allow any conversations of peace with the KKE and the DSE, forcing the Greek Civil War to become increasingly polarised and more entrenched than before.

“OVER 20,000 GREEK CHILDREN WERE REMOVED INTO NEIGHBOURING COMMUNIST NATIONS AS A ‘HUMANITARIAN ACT’”



The political prison at Gyaros, which was known as the 'Dachau of the Mediterranean'

Images: Alamy

1948-49

GREECE REUNIFIED

With the intervention of the USA, the strengthening of the Athens government and the waning of international support for the communists, the end of the civil war was in sight

Throughout 1947 the British government was facing its own post-war financial difficulties, so began exploring ways to abandon its role in Greece. However, the Attlee government was also aware that a sudden 'cut and run' would lead to the collapse of the Greek government and with it a crucial line of communication to the East, as well as another communist regime in the Mediterranean region.

When the United States picked up on this, several key politicians, the ambassador to Greece and the head of the American Mission to the Greek government made it clear that the United States could not afford to lose Greece to the Soviets. Accordingly, President Harry S Truman and Congress approved the transfer of several hundred million dollars to help safeguard the country – part of a large anti-communist package for Europe. This aid immediately improved the situation for the Greek government in the face of fresh communist troops from Albania.

American military intervention and aid mainly came in the form of training and the provision of weaponry to the Greek state and armed forces. The US also supported this with their equipment and aircraft. With this support, by the summer of 1948 the army managed to push the communist

forces further towards the interior and the Albanian border. The US also provided Greece with financial support intended to prop up its economy, but the Greek government sought to appropriate this for its military as it sensed the end of the civil war was close.

While support for the government in Athens grew, international communist support for the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) faltered. Aid from the Soviet Union itself remained limited, and Yugoslavia's supplies of guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry were slowing. There have been discrepancies and disagreements over whether Josip Broz Tito and Yugoslavia or Joseph Stalin and the USSR were the KKE and DSE's main supporters, and there have also been questions over who their preferred supporters were.

These questions have arisen as many Greek communists demonstrated Titoist, Stalinist and even Trotskyist loyalties. This factionalism created issues for the KKE's aims in 1948, during the Tito-Stalin split. This schism in the international communist fraternity happened over ideological differences between Tito and Stalin, such as their approach to the market, the spread of communism, and bureaucratic size and centralisation. This split led to Yugoslavia being expelled from the Cominform, the global

successor organisation of the Comintern, which expanded control from Moscow.

This split had a monumental effect on the communist movement in Greece, and Tito was compelled to row back his support of the KKE. This split also forced the KKE to choose between Stalin and Tito, and they chose Stalin and the USSR. Unknown to the KKE leadership, Stalin had already decided that the communist resistance should 'fold up' as he foresaw that the UK and USA would refuse to let Greece fall. This decision also came with repercussions from Tito. The KKE and the DSE had previously used Yugoslavia as a base and these were forced to move to Albania after Tito closed the border to Greece. Many Tito supporters also left the party in response to the decision, weakening its numbers and its ability to recruit.

As far as Stalin was concerned, the writing was on the wall for the KKE and DSE, and the Greek government could also sense blood and sought to end the conflict. Despite Stalin believing that the communists should 'fold up', they tried to fight on with dwindling supplies and resources. The government pushed the communists back to the Grammos Mountains, near the Albanian border. Here the resistance dug in with trenches, land mines and barbed wire for their last stand, which lasted through the end of 1948 and into 1949.

From here they conducted raids into the surrounding towns. In August 1949 Field Marshal Alexandros Papagos launched Operation Torch and had the army sweep through the mountains, hunt down the communists and take their strongholds – this was completed in three days after the remaining fighters fled to Albania. The Albanian government and head of state, Enver Hoxha, then withdrew their support, removing the last vestige of backing for the KKE and DSE. Many remaining fighters fled to the Soviet Union and neighbouring sympathetic communist countries, and Stalin forced the KKE and DSE to sign a ceasefire agreement with Athens. This, and the total withdrawal of support for the KKE and the DSE, ended the Greek Civil War with a total defeat of the communists.



Left: A bridge that was blown up by the communist DSE to stall the government forces



A parade in central Athens marking the millionth ton of US aid, December 1949



'SINK THE BISMARCK!' **CHURCHILL'S REVENGE**

The Allies were stunned when in 1941 Germany's largest battleship sank the pride of the Royal Navy... but the hunter quickly became the hunted

WORDS JOHN BEALES

With a salvo from its huge guns ringing in the ears of its crew, a cry went up on the bridge of the Bismarck: "She's blowing up!" It was 6am on 24 May 1941, and a huge column of black smoke on the horizon signalled the death of HMS Hood and all but three of its crew of 1,418 men. In the freezing sea 300 miles (483km) west of Iceland, Bismarck and its escort Prinz Eugen had won the Battle of the Denmark Strait. The 'Mighty Hood' was the most famous ship in the world, the pride of the Royal Navy and the embodiment of British sea power, but it had been destroyed within minutes of engaging the enemy.

Damaged and with shells raining from the sky, Hood's companion, HMS Prince of Wales, was forced to flee the scene of carnage. News of Hood's loss could not have come at a worse time for morale in Britain, bombed, beleaguered and reeling from a succession of military retreats and defeats. Germany seemed to have the upper hand. The Kriegsmarine plan to use fast and heavily armed surface raiders to destroy the convoys bringing vital supplies to a besieged Britain looked to be paying off. But the Royal Navy and Britain's leadership was out to avenge the Hood – Winston Churchill quickly issued the order: "Sink the Bismarck!" A dramatic hunt began.

Enter the Bismarck

Symbolically named after the unifier of the modern German state, with a crew of over 2,000 men, displacing nearly 52,000 metric tons and at just over 822ft (250m) in length, Bismarck was Germany's newest, largest and most powerful battleship. With a speed of 29 knots (54kp/h) it could outrun any ship in the Royal Navy, and could fire its 15-inch (38cm) shells up to 22 miles (35km) with its eight independently elevating and firing guns mounted in four turrets. The ship was a sign of Adolf Hitler's intent and ambition. But although its hull was launched in Hamburg on 14 February 1939, under the gaze of a gleeful Führer

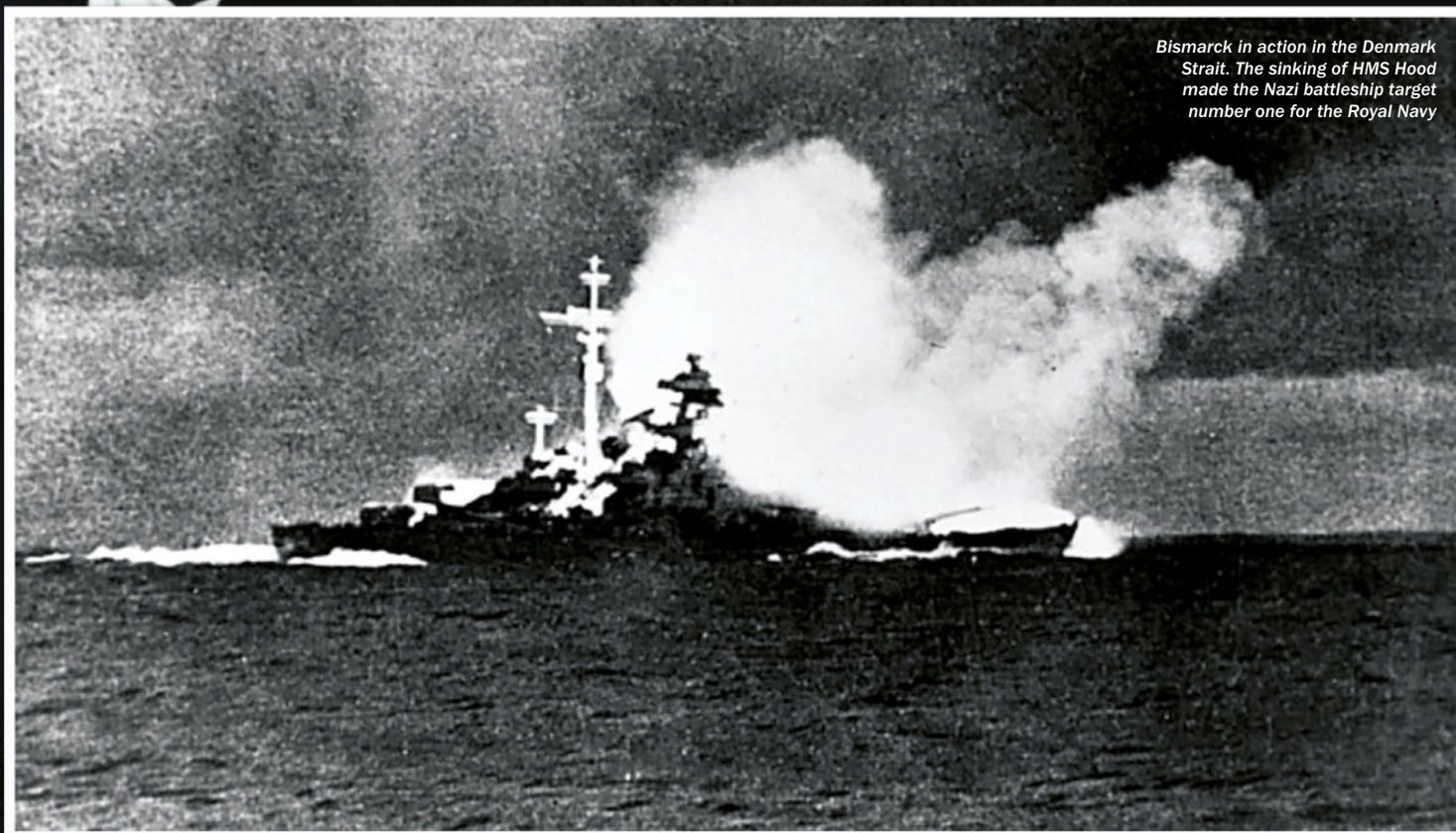
"IN THE FREEZING SEA 300 MILES (483KM) WEST OF ICELAND, BISMARCK AND ITS ESCORT PRINZ EUGEN HAD WON THE BATTLE OF THE DENMARK STRAIT"

and a crowd of 60,000, Bismarck was not ready to undergo sea trials until 18 months later. By that time Germany had already been at war for a year, and the German army and air force have achieved major victories. The German navy, the Kriegsmarine, now needed to do the same.

In January 1941 the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau undertook Operation Berlin, successfully engaging Allied convoys in the Atlantic and sinking and capturing a number of vessels. Grossadmiral Erich Raeder, the head of the Kriegsmarine, saw the opportunity to bring his newest and largest battleship into action in the same role, and a new operation was planned. Codenamed Operation Rheinübung, its premise was simple: Bismarck and the battlecruiser Prinz Eugen would work in tandem. As the prized target, and greatest threat, Bismarck would serve as bait to draw the Royal Navy's escort ships away from the precious convoys, allowing Prinz Eugen the opportunity to sink the unprotected merchant ships with ease with its eight-inch (20cm) guns. Raeder appointed the experienced officer who had led Operation Berlin, Admiral Johann Günther Lütjens, to command the new operation. Otto Ernst Lindemann, a veteran with over 27 years of service – and Germany's leading gunnery expert – was appointed Bismarck's captain.

Moving from Hamburg to the Baltic Sea via the Elbe and Kiel Canal, Bismarck spent two months undertaking sea trials, training its crew and completing its fit out of weapons and equipment before embarking on its mission on 19 May 1941. Although the Royal Navy had a fleet far larger than that

Bismarck in action in the Denmark Strait. The sinking of HMS Hood made the Nazi battleship target number one for the Royal Navy



'SINK THE BISMARCK!'

of the Kriegsmarine, it was thinly stretched protecting the sea lanes to its vast empire. The Germans gambled on moving undetected into the vast expanse of the North Atlantic by first moving the two ships to a fjord in occupied Norway, where they could refuel. However, luck was not on their side.

On 20 May Bismarck was spotted by a warship belonging to neutral Sweden, and its position reported to the British. The next day an RAF Coastal Command Spitfire photographed Bismarck at anchor in the fjord. Admiral John Tovey, commander-in-chief of the British Home Fleet based at Scapa Flow, now knew that it would soon put to sea to attack British merchant shipping. But which route would it take into the North Atlantic? The heavy cruisers HMS Suffolk and HMS Norfolk were already on patrol along a possible northern route through the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland after increased German aerial reconnaissance of the route. Tovey believed the aircraft were monitoring ice floes ahead of an attempted break out of the North Sea by German ships, and deployed the battlecruiser HMS Hood, the largest warship in the world, and the newly built battleship HMS Prince of Wales to augment the Suffolk and Norfolk.

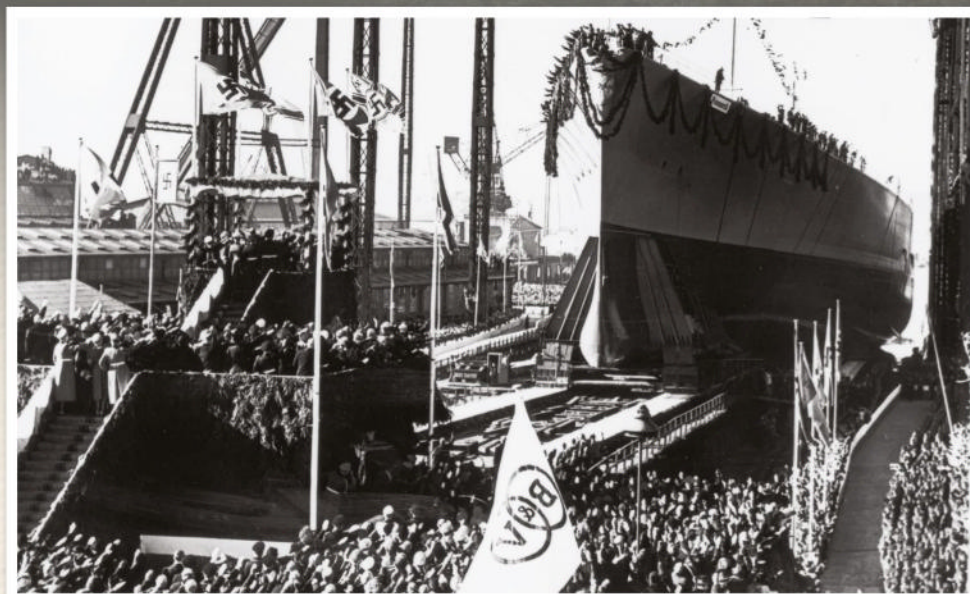
Battle of the Denmark Strait

Bismarck put to sea based on an aerial reconnaissance report that a substantial part of the British Home Fleet was still at anchor at Scapa Flow, Lütjens and Lindemann opting for the northerly route where the weather conditions reduced

visibility and provided some cover for their movements. But the report was wrong: Tovey had a force of over 20 vessels at sea. On the evening of 23 May, Suffolk and Norfolk spotted the German ships.

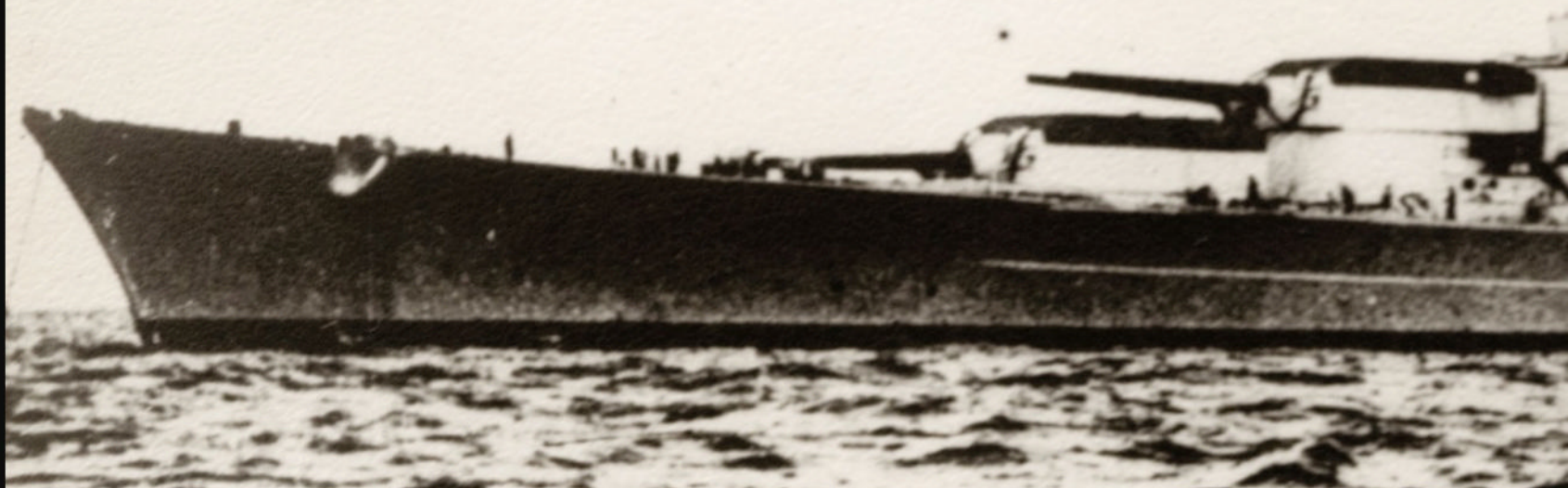
Operating independently, two British ships began shadowing the enemy, avoiding a minefield and ploughing through mist, rain and snowstorms close to the edge of the ice floe. Norfolk successfully evaded several salvoes from Bismarck. Notified of their position, Hood and Prince of Wales and their screen of four destroyers plotted a course to intercept the fast-moving Germans. Unknown to the British, Prinz Eugen had taken the lead position in the German formation. Early in the morning of 24 May Bismarck spotted two British ships at a distance of 17 miles (23km). Hood and Prince of Wales outgunned the Germans but knowing that it was vulnerable to long-distance plunging fire, Hood needed to close the gap with the enemy before opening fire.

At 5:53am on 24 May, Hood fired on the lead enemy ship from a distance of over 14 miles (22.5km). Historian Angus Konstam has pointed out that as the two British ships raced towards their targets, they could only engage using their forward turrets, while the Germans were able to bring all their guns to bear by turning to starboard. Critically, the British initially concentrated their fire on the closest ship, Prinz Eugen. The German vessels returned fire, and a long-range duel began. Prinz Eugen's smaller calibre guns had a quicker rate of fire, and it scored the first hit on Hood,



Left: When its hull was launched in February 1939, Bismarck became Germany's largest battleship

Below: Bismarck's size, speed and armament posed a formidable threat to Allied shipping



starting a small fire. But it was not all one-way traffic. Prince of Wales scored three hits on Bismarck, holing it in the bow and amidships below the waterline.

Bismarck began to lose precious fuel oil, but its return fire was devastating. A succession of salvoes straddled Hood. At 5:59am Captain Lindemann ordered three rounds to be fired at 30-second intervals. At 6:00am, as Hood was turning to bring all its guns to bear, a huge column of flame shot up its mainmast. Seconds later an explosion erupted close to one of its rear gun turrets and the stern broke off.

A colossal column of black smoke rose from the sea as Hood broke apart further and sank, killing 1,415 men. Switching targets, the Germans pummelled Prince of Wales, scoring several hits, including to its bridge where 13 men were killed. Miraculously its captain survived. At 6:13am, with flooding in his generator and boiler rooms, and just 8.2 miles (1.3km) from Bismarck, he turned his ship hard away under the cover of a smokescreen. Bismarck broke off the attack and Prince of Wales escaped. The Battle of the Denmark Strait had lasted 20 minutes, but the battle for the lives of Bismarck and its crew was just beginning.

The hunt begins

Despite its reputation, with comparatively poor deck armour and at 20 years the Bismarck's senior, Hood had been no match for the Nazi behemoth: the German battleship was new, technologically advanced and heavily armoured. But the continuing loss of fuel oil reduced Bismarck's

operational range and made it vulnerable, and Lütjens knew he could not continue his mission. Rather than retracing their route through the Denmark Strait, Lütjens ordered Lindemann to head south for the port of Brest on the west coast of France.

Prinz Eugen was instructed to continue the convoy raiding mission alone and to rendezvous with a German oiler to refuel. But Norfolk and Suffolk were lurking in the thick fog blanketing the sea, keeping out of range and shadowing the Germans using their radar. Lütjens and Lindemann needed to throw them off their trail. Suddenly Bismarck turned as if to attack, and the British ships broke away.

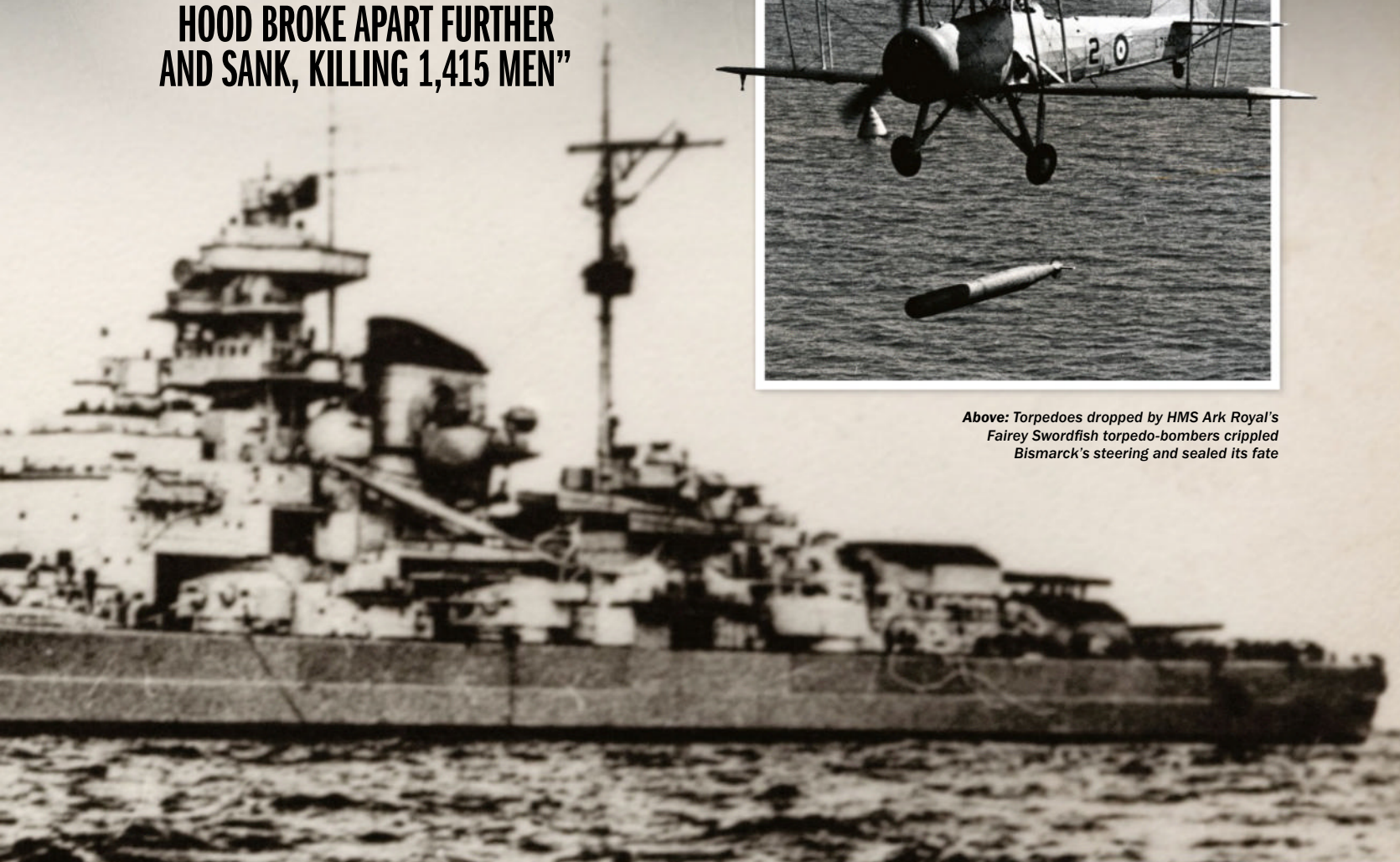
Now out of British radar range, Prinz Eugen sped away. The first part of Bismarck's escape plan had worked, but the badly damaged Prince of Wales then joined Norfolk and Suffolk in support as they continued to shadow Bismarck. The Royal Navy knew that it was critical to maintain contact with it, because with tens of thousands of miles of ocean to hide in along its likely route to safety on the French coast, it would be a difficult task to find it again. Bismarck was now a wounded beast, but still a dangerous one. With the morale of the British public in mind, Churchill ordered Tovey to sink the Bismarck.

When the Hood was sunk, Tovey was already at sea aboard his flagship, the battleship HMS King George V, accompanied by the battlecruiser Repulse, the aircraft carrier Victorious, four cruisers and nine destroyers. In total 65 vessels, together with reconnaissance aircraft,

“A COLOSSAL COLUMN OF BLACK SMOKE ROSE FROM THE SEA AS HOOD BROKE APART FURTHER AND SANK, KILLING 1,415 MEN”



Above: Torpedoes dropped by HMS Ark Royal's Fairey Swordfish torpedo-bombers crippled Bismarck's steering and sealed its fate



'SINK THE BISMARCK!'



Left: This illustration was published soon after the sinking of the Bismarck

"THE BATTLE OF THE DENMARK STRAIT HAD LASTED 20 MINUTES, BUT THE BATTLE FOR THE LIVES OF BISMARCK AND ITS CREW WAS JUST BEGINNING"

Right: The Bismarck could outrun any Royal Navy ship, and its eight 15-inch (38cm) guns had a range of up to 22 miles (35km)

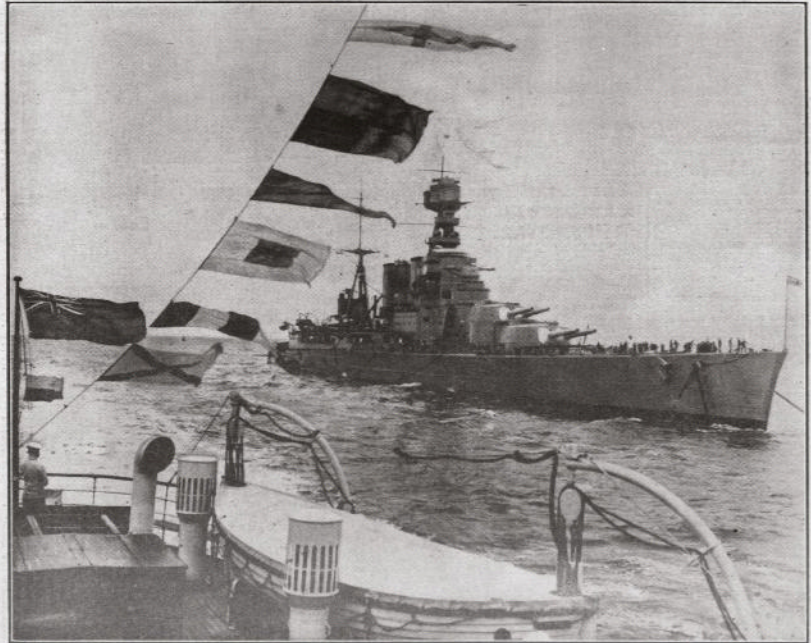
Right: The loss of HMS Hood on 24 May 1941 dealt a huge blow to British morale

5c **SUNDAY MIRROR** **5c**
 WEATHER VAIN AND COOL (LONDON ED PAGE 2) Member of The Associated Press (Copyright, 1941, Daily Mirror, Inc.) FINAL EDITION, 6 A.M. ★★★★★
 Vol. X, No. 21 C Published Eight Times New York, Sunday, May 25, 1941 92 Pages (Including 38 Full Pages and 54 Pages of Comics) 5 cents in Canada

NAZIS SINK HOOD NEAR GREENLAND

1,300 Die on Biggest Warship

Story on Page 3.



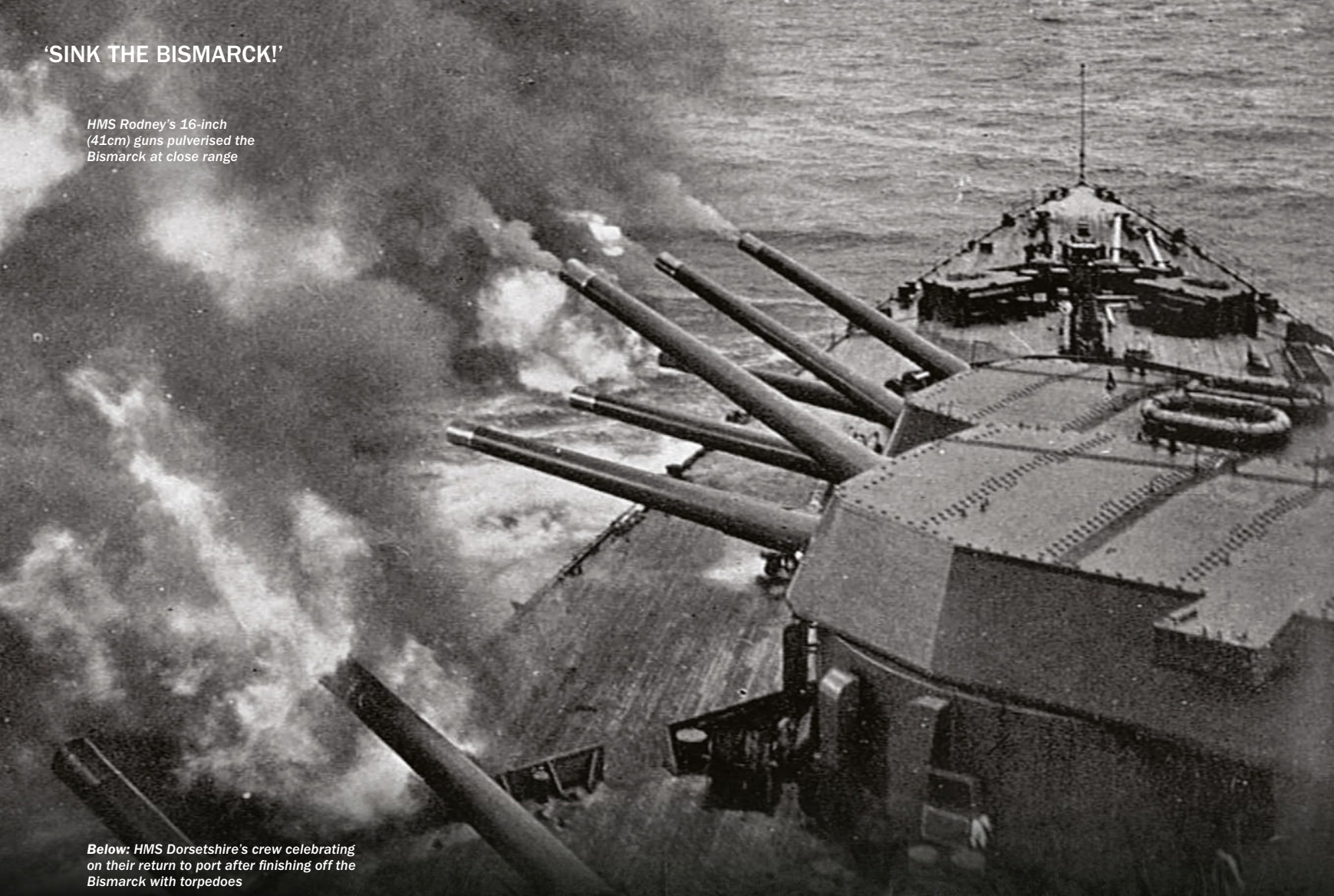
Magazine Blew Up

In a battle of British and German naval giants between Greenland and Iceland, England's 42,100-ton battle cruiser Hood (above) was blown up by a chance hit in a munitions magazine scored by new Nazi battleship Bismarck.

2 full pages of Hood photos—Pages 24 and 25.

'SINK THE BISMARCK!'

HMS Rodney's 16-inch (41cm) guns pulverised the Bismarck at close range



Below: HMS Dorsetshire's crew celebrating on their return to port after finishing off the Bismarck with torpedoes

eventually played some part in the hunt, many of them pulled from convoy escort duties.

To slow Bismarck down, nine Fairey Swordfish torpedo-bombers from Victorious were tasked to attack and at 11:30pm they found their target (Spring in the North Atlantic meant there was still daylight). Bismarck bristled with anti-aircraft guns and the unarmoured biplanes flew at low-level through a wall of flak, scoring one hit: it was the first successful attack by carrier-borne aircraft on a capital ship at sea, but the damage was minimal. Still being shadowed by Norfolk and Suffolk, Lindemann then used the British ships' anti-submarine manoeuvres to his advantage: as they reached their furthest point away from Bismarck

in their zig-zag movement he suddenly changed direction, later changing direction again to resume heading south. The British ships lost radar contact and for many hours it seemed their prey had escaped. But Lütjens assumed the British were still tracking them and made a grave error in radioing his high command. The British Admiralty intercepted his message and were able to triangulate Bismarck's location.

The chase resumed. Now running low on fuel, Bismarck was forced to reduce speed to 20 knots to have any chance of reaching Brest. Tovey's force was gifted the opportunity to close range on their prey, but they feared that Bismarck might still escape them yet. Time was critical. Tovey needed to reduce Bismarck's speed.

On the morning of 26 May an RAF Catalina Flying Boat spotted an oil slick, following it to locate Bismarck 700 miles (1,126km) northwest of Brest. Tovey calculated that Bismarck would be within range of the protective umbrella of the Luftwaffe by the next day – but he had another card to play in this deadly game.

A compact strike force – Force H – based in Gibraltar was already at sea to take over convoy escort duties and had been re-tasked to join the hunt and was steaming towards Bismarck from the south. Among Force H was the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal. Reconnaissance aircraft launched from the carrier confirmed Bismarck's position and continued to shadow it while a strike force of Swordfish armed with torpedoes took off.

Buffeted by gale force winds and blinded by driving rain, they spotted a warship below and moved in to attack. But as they made their low-level attack several of the torpedoes exploded on contact with the sea due to defective arming pistols, and their target evaded the rest. It was a lucky escape – for the British. The aircraft had mistakenly

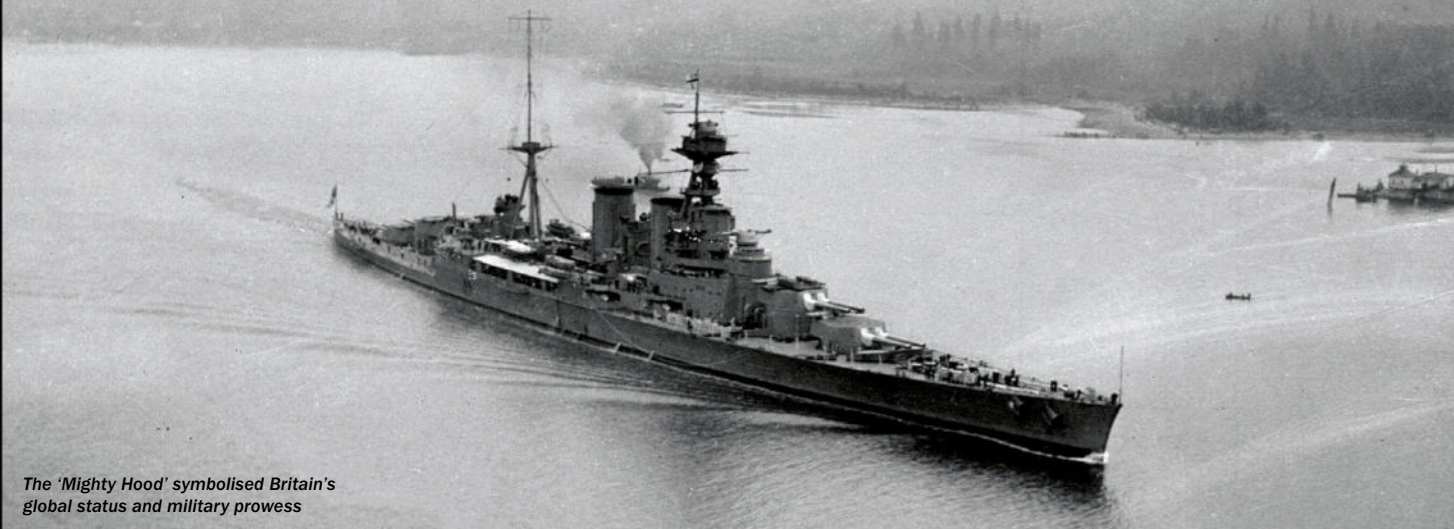


— THE 'MIGHTY HOOD' —

One battleship symbolised Britain's military might and global prestige

Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805 gave Britain command of the seas. In the late 19th century a patriotic organisation called the Navy League was formed to bolster that dominance, recruiting 120,000 members to promote the navy politically, and keep it in the public consciousness. In the aftermath of the First World War the League took over the running of the Admiralty's Sea Cadet scheme. Propaganda and popular culture emphasised the importance Britain's senior military service, and the British public developed a fascination with battleships.

By the 1930s hundreds of thousands of visitors were flocking to view them during the annual Navy Week. Built in 1918 and commissioned in 1920, HMS Hood became a sensation as the world's largest battleship, undertaking a global tour and 'flying the flag' for Britain. It was assumed by the British public to be invincible, but was virtually obsolete by the outbreak of the Second World War. Besides the tragic loss of life, Hood's sinking shocked the nation because it raised the prospect that Britannia no longer ruled the waves.



The 'Mighty Hood' symbolised Britain's global status and military prowess

"RUNNING LOW ON FUEL, BISMARCK WAS FORCED TO REDUCE SPEED TO 20 KNOTS TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF REACHING BREST"

attacked HMS Sheffield after a signal advising the fleet that it was shadowing Bismarck failed to reach Ark Royal.

The Swordfish returned to re-arm. This time, older torpedoes fitted with contact-arming pistols were slung underneath the seemingly obsolete biplanes. The weather had deteriorated further and at 7:15pm, as the deck beneath them rolled and pitched in 50ft (15m) waves, they somehow took off again. A wall of cloud extending from 10,000ft (3,048m) down to 700ft (213m) hampered their approach. Splitting into small groups, or approaching alone, the 15 aircraft made their low-level attacks from different directions, forcing Bismarck's anti-aircraft gunners to divide their fire.

The Swordfish did not hang around to confirm any hits. Peppered with bullets and shrapnel they returned to Ark Royal. But Sheffield quickly reported that Bismarck was making erratic movements. Two torpedoes had found their target: one hitting amidships, and the other exploding at Bismarck's stern, damaging its steering gear and jamming its rudder at an angle of 12 degrees to port. Bismarck was no longer fully manoeuvrable.

Efforts to unjam the rudder failed and it was now doomed to move in a long, slow circle that would take it away from the safety of the French coast and towards its hunters. At 9:40pm Lütjens radioed his high command with a short, desperate message: "Ship unable to manoeuvre. We will fight to the last shell. Long live the Führer."

Allied ships shadowed and harassed Bismarck throughout the night, illuminating it with star shells. The Polish destroyer Piorun fired at it and several others unleashed torpedoes. But the colossus fought back. Sheffield was hit, and three men killed. Shells straddled other British ships, causing damage and further casualties. Lütjens radioed that he was surrounded. Bismarck's fate seemed certain. But its formidable guns were all clearly still intact, and more British ships now joined the hunt, ploughing through heavy seas to converge on their target from different directions and close in for the kill: among them were the battleship HMS Rodney and the heavy cruiser HMS Dorsetshire. Tovey decided to wait for full light to press their attack. Norfolk was the first ship to sight Bismarck early on 27 May. It moved away and reported its position. At 8:43am lookouts aboard King George V located Bismarck some 14 miles (22.5km) away bearing directly towards them, and Tovey's flagship signalled "Enemy in Sight".

Last stand of the Bismarck

With its steering largely unresponsive, Bismarck was turning north-west and its speed had dropped to just ten knots when King George V and Rodney began their attack, supported by Norfolk and Dorsetshire. Rodney opened fire at 8:47am, followed by King George V. Bismarck quickly returned fire. Despite its continuous movement to port, the gale-force winds and rough seas – its gunnery remained potent.

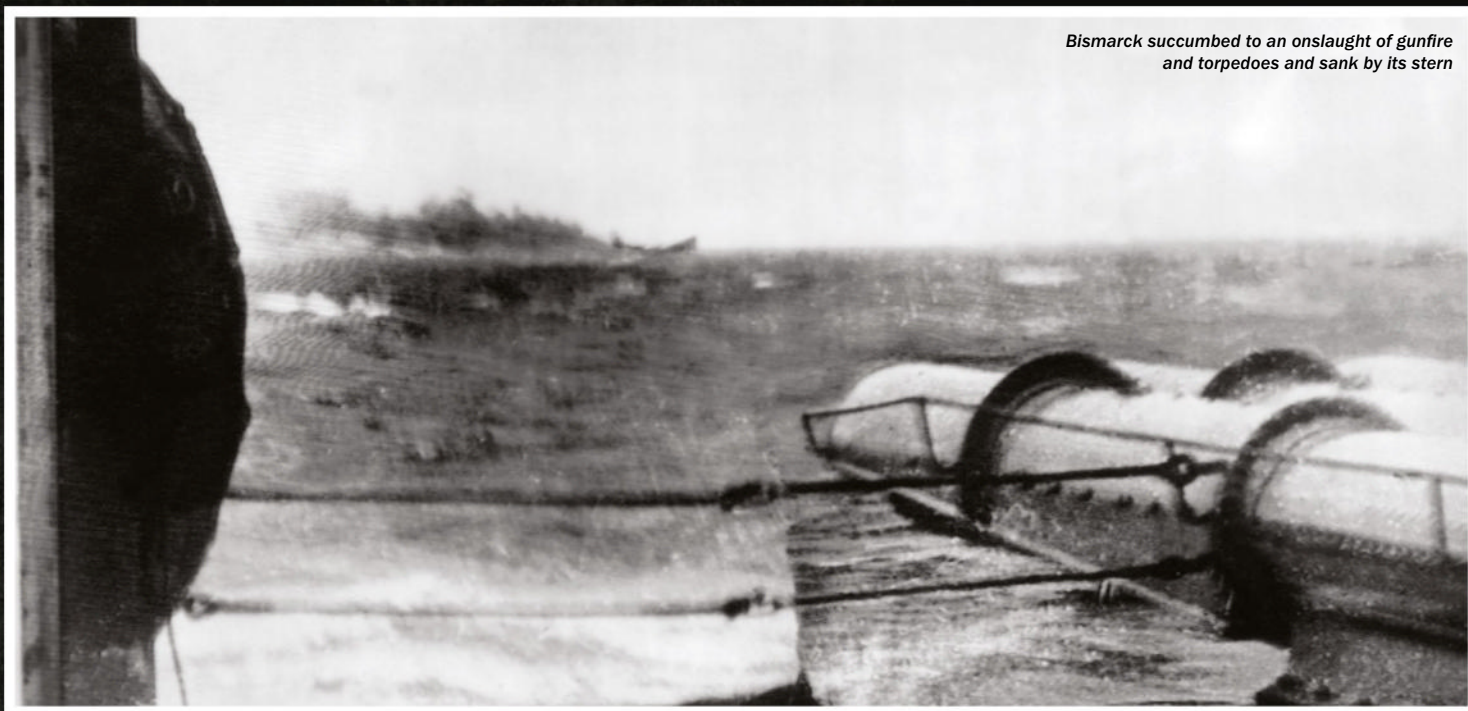
Near misses straddled Rodney, showering its superstructure with deadly shrapnel. But Rodney quickly scored hits, destroying Bismarck's forward gun control position and causing a blast that devastated its bridge. Lindemann and Lütjens were among those killed. Shells continued to rain down on Bismarck, and its aft gun control centre was also hit. With its centralised gunnery control

"SINK THE BISMARCK!"

HMS Dorsetshire picking up survivors from Bismarck. A submarine alert meant that many men were left in the sea

FURTHER READING

- David Mearns and Rob White, *Hood and Bismarck: The Deep-Sea Discovery of an Epic Battle* (Channel 4 Books, 2001)
- Ralph Harrington, "'The Mighty Hood': Navy, Empire, War at Sea and the British National Imagination, 1920-60", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 38, No 2, 2003, p171-185
- Angus Konstam, *The Bismarck 1941: Hunting Germany's Greatest Battleship* (Osprey, 2011)
- Iain Ballantyne, *Bismarck: 24 Hours to Doom* (Agora, 2021)



Bismarck succumbed to an onslaught of gunfire and torpedoes and sank by its stern

“THE REST OF THE MEN SUCCUMBED TO THE COLD AND THE ROUGH SEAS AND SLIPPED BENEATH THE WAVES LIKE THEIR SHIP”

system destroyed, each of Bismarck's turrets was forced to fire independently. One by one they too were destroyed.

Bismarck's crew knew their ship was doomed. But to make sure it sank, explosive charges with timed fuses were laid in the engine room, and watertight doors were opened in order to scuttle the vessel before it was abandoned. British shells continued to smash into the stricken ship and by 10:15am it was a blazing wreck. Tovey wrote in his official report: “Men could be seen jumping overboard, preferring death by drowning in the stormy sea to the appalling effects of our fire.”

But Bismarck remained defiantly afloat, with its ensign still flying. Rodney moved to within 1.6 miles (2.6km) – point-blank range in naval gunfire terms – and fired salvo after salvo. A torpedo from its hull-mounted torpedo tubes also hit home. Bismarck was now settling by the stern and listing heavily to port, but still did not sink. Tovey ordered torpedo-armed ships to attack, and Rodney and King George V disengaged.

With Bismarck's decks awash, Dorsetshire moved in to finish the job and scored two hits on its starboard side with 21-inch (53cm) deck-mounted torpedoes. Moving to Bismarck's port side, a third torpedo struck home. Bismarck's crew had swelled to over 2,200 men for Operation Rheinübung, and many of those not already killed were trapped below decks or in its blazing gun turrets and superstructure. An estimated 800 men managed to abandon ship, but few were to survive. The Royal Navy vessels involved in the final attack had fired thousands of shells and scored hundreds of hits. At 10:37am Bismarck finally succumbed, heeled to port and capsized, disappearing into the dark abyss of the Atlantic. The 1,750-mile (2,815km) chase was over.

The Royal Navy now enacted the unspoken code of the sea and began to pick up survivors. One crewman from the Dorsetshire dived into the water to help wounded men floundering alongside his ship. Dorsetshire recovered 86 men, HMS Maori another 25. But the horror was not over for Bismarck's crew. At 11:40am a lookout on Dorsetshire

reported a possible U-boat periscope and rescue attempts were abandoned with survivors still in the water. That night three men were rescued by U-74. Late the next day another two were rescued by the German weather ship Sachsenwald. Other ships found a few bodies, but the rest of the men succumbed to the cold and the rough seas and slipped beneath the waves like their ship. Just 116 were rescued, with one of them later dying from his wounds. The crew of Dorsetshire buried him at sea with full military honours.

Bismarck's sinking was announced in the House of Commons by Churchill. The news was met with jubilation in Britain and was reported around the world. The aircrews and sailors that had hunted it down were lauded as heroes. Magnanimous in victory, Tovey praised the actions of his adversary: “The Bismarck had put up a most gallant fight against impossible odds, worthy of the old days of the Imperial German Navy, and she went down with her colours still flying.” Victory was sweet for the Allies, and newspapers and newsreel films proclaimed that Hood and its crew had been avenged. Tovey opined that the Royal Navy had scored a victory of far greater significance to the conduct of the war than the sinking of just one battleship. He turned out to be right.

Aftermath

Despite the sinking of HMS Hood, Operation Rheinübung was a failure. Bismarck had been sunk on its first mission and Prinz Eugen returned to port without sinking a single merchant ship. Soon after, the Kriegsmarine abandoned the use of heavy warships as surface raiders against Allied shipping, instead relying on its U-boats. Ultimately, Germany would lose that battle in the Atlantic too. But not until over 100,000 men from both sides, and over 13 million tons of shipping, had also gone to a watery grave.

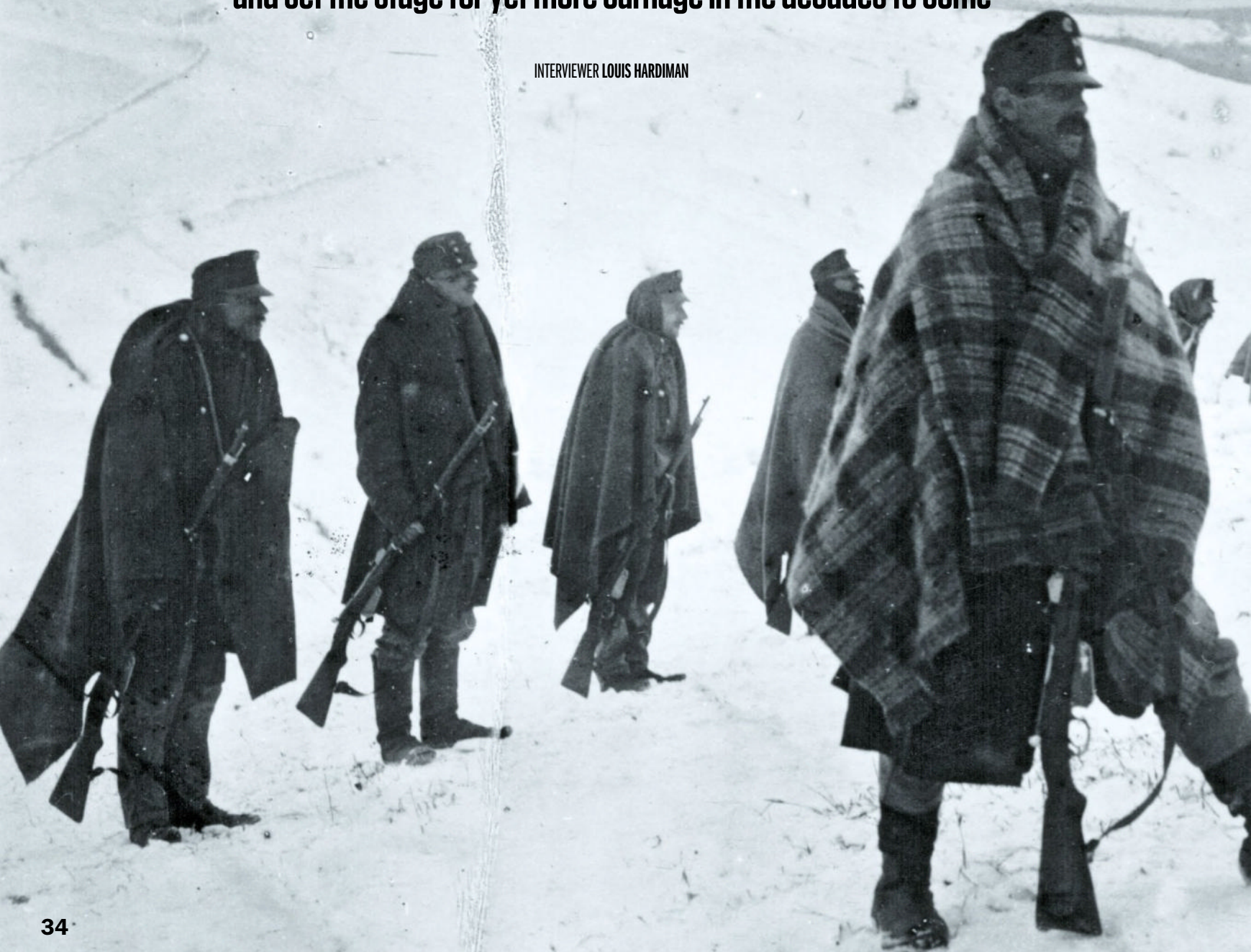
The short but dramatic story of the Bismarck and the sinking of the Hood has been the source of fascination ever since. On 9 June 1989, the wreck of Bismarck was found by an expedition led by Dr Robert D Ballard, the deep-sea explorer who had found the Titanic. Lying at a depth of 15,700ft (4,790 metres), its turrets and sections of its superstructure had fallen away as it overturned, but it had righted itself and settled hull down on the seabed. In 2001 David L Mearns led a search sponsored by Channel 4 to survey Bismarck's location again, going on to find the wreck of the Hood for the first time. Combined, they are the resting place of over 3,500 men.

THE WAR NO ONE WANTED

INTERVIEW WITH NICK LLOYD

Three times the size of the Western Front, the war in the East saw over 6.5 million killed and set the stage for yet more carnage in the decades to come

INTERVIEWER LOUIS HARDIMAN





© Rebecca Northway

The *Eastern Front* is the second book in Professor Nick Lloyd's First World War trilogy, which began with *The Western Front*, published in 2021. In this second volume, Lloyd uncovers what Winston Churchill named the "unknown war", spanning much of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. While reconstructing the front's story, Lloyd meticulously details the vast, devastating battles that led to the collapse of three empires.

The Eastern Front paints a vivid picture of this blood-soaked conflict through eyewitness reports, diaries and memoirs from the soldiers and civilians who struggled for survival in the East. In this book, many of these sources have been translated into English for the first time.

Professor Lloyd spoke with *History of War* about the characteristics of the Eastern Front, detailing how its size and mobility created distinct experiences for the men who fought, while posing unique tactical challenges for commanders. He also covers how a fragile and tense peace came to the Eastern Front via the Russian Revolution and the Brest-Litovsk and Versailles treaties. The borders drawn in the peacemaking process remain central in understanding Europe's bloody 20th century and the current war in Ukraine.

What was the balance of military power in the East during the opening months of the First World War?

The Eastern Front started in a bizarre way with three main protagonists who didn't want to fight, although smaller powers came in later. On the traditional Eastern Front, there was the Russian Army, which was the largest, over

four million men. Then there was the Habsburg Empire, whose armies were split between the Galician main front in the northeastern corner of the empire bordering Russia, about two million men, and the considerable forces against Serbia as well. The German Eighth Army was limited to East Prussia because when the war began seven-eighths of the German Army was in France and Belgium on the Western Front.

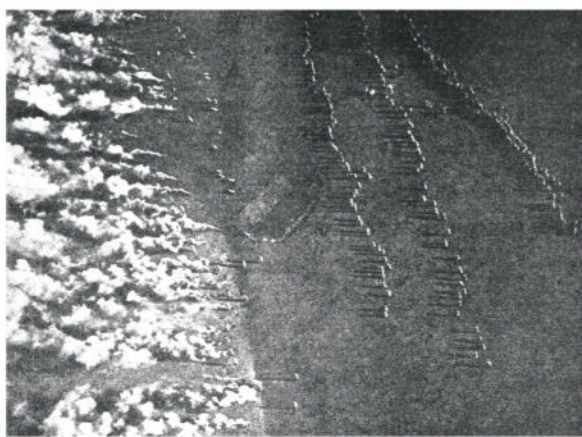
The war in the East started out with nobody wanting to fight. The Germans had massed their troops in the West to win a decisive victory there. The Habsburg Empire wanted to fight against Serbia to quash its troublesome Balkan neighbour and they didn't want to fight the Russians. The Russians didn't want to engage the Germans because they were wary of German strength and wanted to focus on the Austrians.

What caused the Eastern Front to be so mobile compared to the relatively static Western Front?

The Eastern Front was a big area, at least three-times the size of the Western Front. The entirety of the Western Front was about 400 miles (644km) and significant parts of that weren't active, such as the mountainous regions on the border with Switzerland. The Eastern Front was much longer, stretching from the Baltic states through Poland and around the Carpathians, and it extended even further in 1916 when Romania came in. The space-to-force ratio in the Western Front led to deadlock with too many people and too much firepower, but that was never the case in the East. Winston Churchill himself described the armies on the Eastern Front as too small. There were areas with trenches and field positions, but there was always room for manoeuvre.



Hungarian infantrymen struggle onwards under harsh conditions in the Carpathian Mountains



Above: A German gas attack against Russian troops photographed by a recon aircraft



Above: Tsar Nicholas II visits troops in preparation of the Brusilov Offensive, 1916

THE WAR NO ONE WANTED

The vast space prevented a deadlock and the Eastern Front became the war the Germans expected and could understand. They were able to do operational flanking manoeuvres and use cavalry and mobile artillery. The West remained the opposite, and it's telling that when Hindenburg and Ludendorff returned to the West in 1916, they were shocked and appalled. They hadn't appreciated what the West was like and they began to understand why the German Chief of General Staff Erich von Falkenhayn had not wanted to part with many divisions to fight with Russia in the East.

Mobile war meant soldiers on the Eastern Front remained in combat for longer sustained periods, with one German soldier recalling 37 days of uninterrupted combat. How did these demands impact men's morale and fighting capabilities?

We particularly see this with the Austrians and Germans, who were not as good at bringing men in and out as we are used to on the Western Front. There, British soldiers would have a couple of days in the frontmost trenches before moving out, so they were always well-prepared and well-fed. For the Germans and Austrians in the East, it was much more haphazard. Divisions only got taken out when they were exhausted. It was also more difficult because of the lack of train links, which made massing troops and reacting to attacks difficult. Russia particularly struggled with moving troops and they had to do a lot of marching. Meanwhile, on the Western Front, British soldiers could have been in the trenches in the morning, gotten on a train, and been back in London the same night. This made the East a much more demanding theatre.



Images: Getty

Above: A German mortar position in Transylvania, 1916

Without the claustrophobia of the West, intensity came in periods and large stretches of the front would be relatively quiet for months. Soldiers had the time to make comfortable dugouts because the action was extremely far away. There is an account of an Austrian trench where the soldiers planted flowers and built wooden huts.

What were the environmental characteristics of the Eastern Front?

The Eastern Front is challenging from a geographical perspective. It ranges from deep, almost primeval forests in the Baltic and Poland. Then, the Carpathian Mountains have snowy, difficult, hilly conditions. Further on are the plains of western Ukraine and Belorussia. There is a sense from the German soldiers who fight there that it is like going back in time and the vastness of the East has a profound impact on them.



“THERE WAS SOME BAD TREATMENT OF BELGIAN CIVILIANS ON THE WESTERN FRONT... BUT THAT WAS NOTHING LIKE THE HORRORS IN THE EAST”

Men on the Eastern Front also had to tackle environmental challenges, particularly when fighting in severe winter conditions. We see this in accounts from the Carpathian Mountains in the winter of 1915, where there was heavy fighting. Men underwent terrible conditions, thawing out rifles, moving on sleds and fighting without artillery because the guns couldn't be brought up. In parts of the East, there would only be a handful of guns for a mile.

Conditions across all armies were appalling, with men having to fight in cotton jackets in the depths of winter, but there was some variation. The Austrians were not equipped for winter warfare and the Russians tended to be hardier. Deaths from hypothermia and exposure were commonplace. There was one instance where a whole Austrian regiment walked over to the Russians and gave up because they'd had enough.

Without the same claustrophobia as the Western Front, how was artillery used differently in the East?

The Austrians were especially light in heavy and medium guns despite the Skoda factory producing some of the best artillery in the world. They realised this need almost immediately but were constantly light throughout the war. The Germans had excellent 150mm [6in] artillery and were able to make use of that.

There weren't the long bombardments of up to ten days that we can see on the Western Front. Instead, there were 'hurricane' bombardments with three or four hours of intensive shelling. Defences were also thin, so commanders could be more imaginative with artillery. The Germans used creeping barrages later on in the war and the Russians concentrated artillery during the Brusilov Offensive in 1916, with the Austrians on the receiving end.

However, once the front started to move, it took a while for the guns to go up. This meant there was a lot more room to breathe on the Eastern Front, with good and bad results. There also wasn't much intensive learning about artillery, with only the Germans trying new ways to use artillery in the East. Meanwhile, in the West, armies were learning to use artillery in close co-ordination with infantry and deployed counter-battery fire.

What do you think accounts for the comparatively cruel treatment of civilians on the Eastern Front?

There was some bad treatment of Belgian civilians on the Western Front working in factories in impressed labour, but that was nothing like the horrors in the East. Once the Eastern Front moved, there was an unravelling of the ethnic make-up of the states, particularly in Poland, Ukraine and Austria-Hungary. Both powers used the war to settle old scores and envisage new forms of order after the war. That rapidly turned into elements of ethnic cleansing, and the Jews tended to be the first victims of the retreating Russian armies. They viewed the Jews as being pro-German or Austrian, so they looked at them with suspicion. The Russians often packed Jewish people off into long refugee columns and there were scattered pogroms.

Then, when the Austrians advanced into the Russian Empire, they encountered ethnic groups that they tried to use to undermine Russia by offering them independence. Russia was doing the same thing, promising that they could free certain ethnic groups from the Central Powers. Ethnic groups gaining quasi-independence was a huge problem for the

Russian cavalry, an important tool for covering ground on the vast Eastern Front





Above: Representatives from Russia and Germany sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, allowing Russia to formally exit the war

Tsar's forces because it threatened to unravel the empire, so they reacted by uprooting populations from areas where they could come under Austrian influence. This intertwined with the Great Retreat of 1915, where the Russian army used scorched-earth tactics, burning villages. The Eastern Front never got to the Ottoman levels of genocide against the Armenians, but it was nasty and got worse as the war went on. When the Eastern Front intensified, the stakes got higher and populations found themselves in the middle of different forces. They had to predict who was going to win and offer their loyalty accordingly.

The Russians also tried to bring further populations under the influence of Russian culture. When they moved into



Russian troops destroy a village while retreating

Ukraine, they embarked on Russification. They removed Ukrainian speakers, changed road signs to Russian and insisted Ukrainian wasn't taught in schools, which was a similar process to what is happening today.

How did the revolution impact Russia's ability to fight?

Lots has been written about the Russian Revolution and historians tend to be interested in the politics with the war as a backdrop. I came at it from the other angle, interested in the war and how the revolution had a catastrophic effect on it. It was really fascinating to see in the second half of the book how the Eastern Front and Russian Army just dissolved.

Tsar Nicholas II with Cossack troops. Spending extended periods with the army disconnected him from the coming revolution in Petrograd



Russia gradually deteriorated as the war went on, although they managed to revive themselves early in 1916 and crack the Austrian Army. Yet, the winter and autumn of 1916 was when they began to decline in morale. At that point, there was a scandal with Rasputin and the generals lost confidence in the Tsar. With growing disorder in Petrograd, they felt that they had to make a stand and the army completely fell apart after the revolution. The death of the Eastern Front is fascinating, bewildering and farcical because the Russian Army was eating itself in the final days of Tsarist Russia and the new revolutionary state. What was interesting in writing the book was following that story through because the Eastern Front didn't end in 1917, but in 1918.

What I found particularly fascinating was that the generals and leaders at the top of Tsarist Russia, one of the most stratified societies in history, saw their army dissolving around them and they couldn't understand the bewildering sense of chaos as 1917 went on. There were men like Mikhail Alekseyev who had to plead with private soldiers in person to fight on. The generals kept trying to attack, hoping that victory would pull everything together, and when this didn't work, the army disappeared around them. It got to a strange situation where generals packed their bags and drove back to Moscow while the state fell to pieces around them, meaning they didn't really have a home to go back to.

With that came the strange end of the Eastern Front because it didn't really end despite the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Germany still had to deal with chaos in the East and keep millions of men there to exploit its resources, morphing

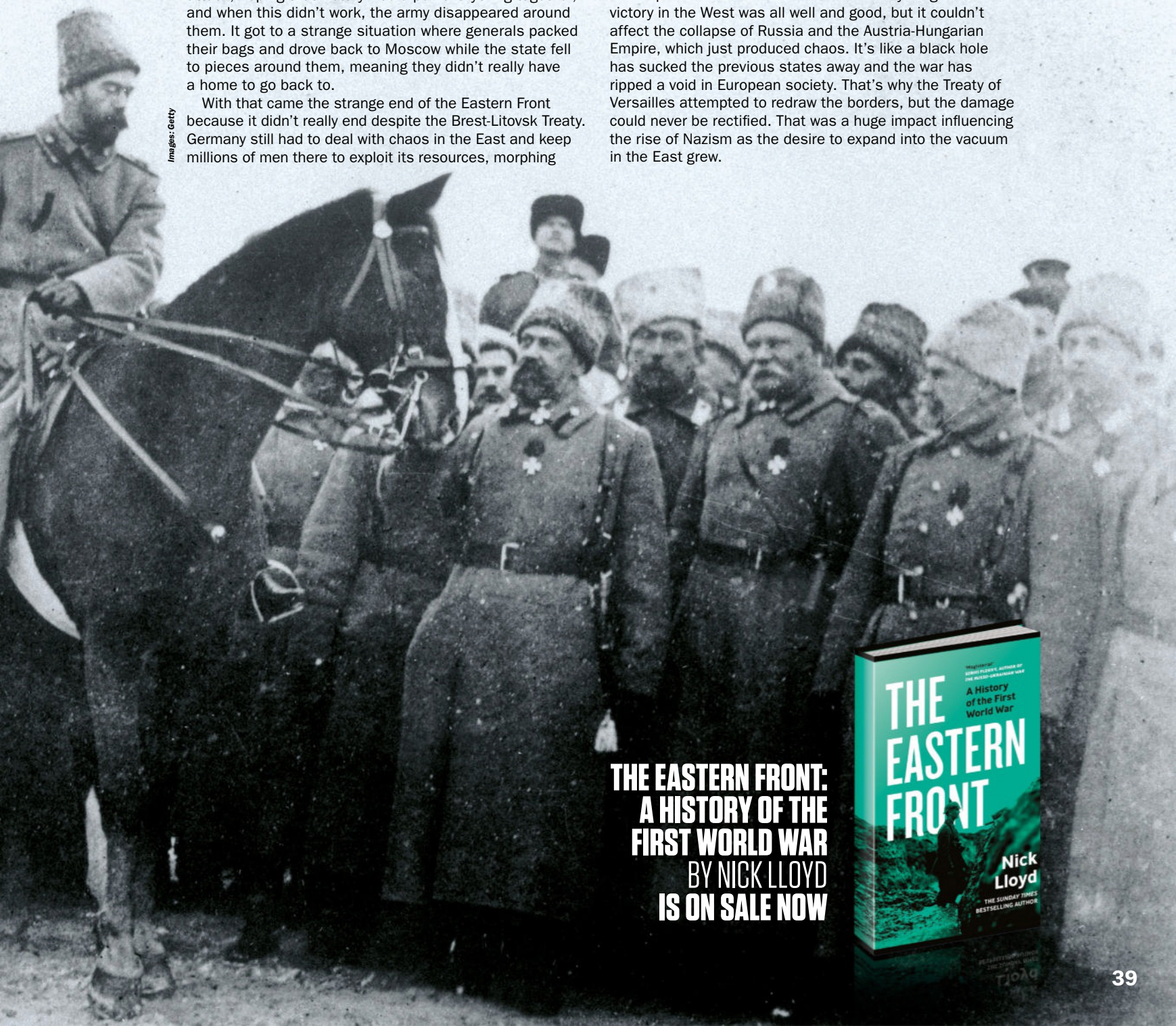
into another type of war. As soon as the ink on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was dry, the Bolsheviks began working on ways to undermine it. Ludendorff was a black-and-white individual. He had won in the East but couldn't work out why the Bolsheviks weren't accepting defeat. Instead, they were flooding Ludendorff's lines with propaganda.

What is the post-war settlement in the East and did it heal the wounds of the war?

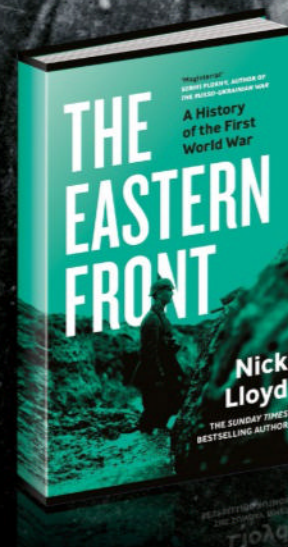
No, the settlement doesn't heal the wounds of the war because it's completely chaotic and everyone loses. The Russian state collapses, and the Bolsheviks inherit large parts of it while the western borderlands are ripped away. Ukraine becomes independent and is invaded, while the Baltic states and Poland are under occupation by the Central Powers. When they have to evacuate this area, a massive power vacuum is left. The Austria-Hungary Empire collapses and new states emerge, while Romania is enlarged. The chaos is unresolved by the time the Second World War begins and continues into the Cold War after that.

The kind of wounds that the war causes in the East are so deep and brutal that it doesn't solve anything. The victory in the West was all well and good, but it couldn't affect the collapse of Russia and the Austria-Hungarian Empire, which just produced chaos. It's like a black hole has sucked the previous states away and the war has ripped a void in European society. That's why the Treaty of Versailles attempted to redraw the borders, but the damage could never be rectified. That was a huge impact influencing the rise of Nazism as the desire to expand into the vacuum in the East grew.

Images: Getty



**THE EASTERN FRONT:
A HISTORY OF THE
FIRST WORLD WAR
BY NICK LLOYD
IS ON SALE NOW**





Heroes of the Victoria Cross

DAVID HORNELL

In June 1944, above the North Atlantic, a Canadian flight lieutenant engaged an enemy U-boat before leading his aircrew in a battle against the elements

WORDS ALEX BOWERS

With the starboard engine on fire, the wireless unresponsive, one weapon jammed and the entire aircraft shaking violently, pilot David Hornell pressed his Canso 9754 'P' into the attack. Below at a distance of 1,500ft (460m), the surfaced U-1225 – a German submarine some 120 miles (193km) off the Shetland Islands – continued scoring hits with its twin 0.8in (20mm) flak guns. The 34-year-old Canadian was undeterred. Straddling a fine line between evasive action and staying on course, Hornell readied himself to drop depth charges when suddenly, at no less than 900ft (275m), the U-boat turned to port. This had not been part of the flight lieutenant's plan of approaching from astern. Hesitate, and there would be no second chance. Lose his nerve, and it would be Hornell and his seven-man crew, not U-1225, at the bottom of the North Atlantic. It was now or never.

A Toronto native, ex-Goodyear Tire & Rubber employee and former Sunday School teacher, David 'Bud' Hornell had led a fairly ordinary life, even after the outbreak of war. He had enrolled in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1941 and helped defend Canadian waters during the following years. That changed in early 1944 when his 162 Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) Squadron was seconded to RAF Coastal Command and transferred to Allied-occupied Iceland. There, the unit's twin-engine Canso

aircraft – Canadian-built versions of the US PBY Catalina – joined efforts to close the Mid-Atlantic Gap, an area between North America and Britain out of range of Allied patrol planes. Their absence had resulted in German U-boats wreaking havoc against Allied convoys, but the arrival of No 162 Squadron had already made a significant difference. From May 1944, a detachment had also been sent to RAF Wick

Below: A consolidated Catalina, or Canso, on exercise at Gaspe, Quebec, June 1943



in northern Scotland to prevent enemy attacks on the Allied D-Day fleet. Such duties, though necessary, could be long and tedious, as had been the case for Canso 9754 'P' following an uneventful ten-hour patrol that 24 June 1944. The crew had been looking forward to returning to Wick when 2nd Flight Sergeant Israel Joseph Bodnoff identified the surfaced U-boat.

Much happened in the short time between the sighting and Hornell's deadly game of chicken. With the pilot having himself spied the submarine, he sounded the klaxon signalling action stations, banked sharply and headed straight for the target. However, it soon became evident that they were not alone in their battle readiness. Flak shells exploded in the sky around the aircraft, growing in intensity as it approached the clearly alerted U-boat.

Flying Officer Graham Campbell returned fire from the nose guns directed at the conning tower. Meanwhile, fellow crew members joined in the cacophony from their weapon stations, appearing to score several hits against German personnel gathered on top of U-1225. But those operating the vessel's guns also achieved success, peppering the Canso's with shrapnel. It was then that the starboard engine burst into flames and the starboard gun gave out. It was then that Hornell took his only chance, releasing the depth charges at an altitude of 50ft (15m) above the target.

David Hornell was one of two RCAF members to earn the Victoria Cross during the Second World War, the other being Andrew Mynarsk

**"THIS OFFICER
DISPLAYED VALOUR AND
DEVOTION TO DUTY OF
THE HIGHEST ORDER"**

Victoria Cross Citation

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

The explosives struck home. Detonating beneath the hull of U-1225, the submarine disappeared beneath the waves with all 56 hands, including its commander Oberleutnant Ernst Sauerberg. It had been on its first and last patrol. Yet for Hornell and his crew there was no time to celebrate. Flight Sergeant Sydney Reginald Cole, recovering from the shock of sustaining minor injuries, did not recall witnessing Hornell's exploits – what he did remember was the sight of the starboard engine falling from the aircraft mere moments later. With smoke filling the cockpit and fuselage, and with flames threatening the fuel tanks, returning to Wick was out of the question. Hornell only had one option: ditch. The pilot turned into the wind and attempted to bring the Canso down safely, but there could be no avoiding the rough swell. The seaplane bounced 150ft (46m) on the first wave and 50ft (15m) on the second. Finally, through Hornell's skill at the controls, they came to a rest unharmed.

Hornell and his seven comrades had endured their ordeal by fire, now came their ordeal by water. The flight lieutenant and his co-captain, Flying Officer Bernard Charles Denomy, escaped via hatches above their heads as the remaining crew likewise made hasty exits, aware the aircraft could explode at any minute. With one of the inflatable four-man rafts damaged beyond use, there was little choice but for five crew members to crowd inside the surviving dinghy, the rest taking turns in the unforgiving sea. Hornell volunteered to stay



Hornell completed 60 operational missions. Initially plagued by airsickness, he became an adept and courageous pilot

outside clinging on with Denomy and Flying Officer Sidney Edward Matheson. Together, the men watched as the North Atlantic claimed Canso 9754 'P' over the course of 20 minutes, at which stage their dinghy had become

inundated with water. Having removed his trousers to swim better, Hornell fashioned a makeshift bucket by tying the legs together. He then passed it over to Campbell who, alongside the others, frantically scooped out the water to keep everyone afloat.

Four hours passed, and the sea grew choppy. Campbell and Flight Sergeant Donald Stewart Scott had replaced Hornell and Denomy in the water, followed by Bodnoff relieving Matheson. Yet as the waves rose from 18ft to 25ft (5-8m) and the wind surged from 20 to 30 knots, hopes began to diminish. That was until salvation – or at least the faint chance of it – arrived in the form of an aircraft appearing overhead. The dinghy fired a series of distress flares toward the Catalina of 333 (Norwegian) Squadron in a desperate effort to get its attention. Jubilation filled the raft once it became clear that they had been successful. The Catalina had indeed noticed the beleaguered crew, signalling to them that a rescue launch was en route. What's more, the aircraft confirmed the sinking of U-1225, a fact they had already been relatively confident about due to the presence of floating debris and bodies. Now the men had reason for renewed hope, which Hornell used to encourage his comrades over the ensuing hours at sea. Hope, however, could only go so far in their battle against the elements.

As the Catalina circled above – eventually replaced by a succession of other aircraft – darkness brought ever-worsening conditions. A 50-knot wind whipped up

Some of Hornell's Canso crew relaxing between anti-submarine patrols in Iceland. From left to right: Scott, Denomy, Matheson, Hornell and Campbell





Hornell's widow, Genevieve, unveils a portrait of the late Victoria Cross recipient at a public event. They had married on 26 January 1943

40ft (12m) waves, chilling the crew to the bone. Those in the dinghy tried staying warm by rubbing each other's limbs and shielding a half-naked Hornell from the freezing gusts. Most concerning was their collective weakness and how, over time, their vigilance waned. "We had to lean over to counterbalance the boat when taking the bigger waves," noted Cole, "and we were all pretty stupid and groggy, and were beginning to let the bigger ones sneak up on us, with danger of capsizing." Cole's fear became reality at around 8.40am the next day, 25 June, when one such wave "flipped us over neat as a pancake". Mustering all their strength, the men managed to right their raft and clamber back in. Their next great test came at 10.30am when a Vickers Warwick aircraft dropped a lifeboat only for it to land downwind. In defiance of his deteriorating state, Hornell offered to swim out to it but was restrained.

There was still no sign of the rescue launch. Unbeknown to the cold and huddled

"HORNELL AND HIS SEVEN COMRADES HAD ENDURED THEIR ORDEAL BY FIRE, NOW CAME THEIR ORDEAL BY WATER"

group, the slowly approaching rescue boat had developed engine trouble which, combined with the storm, had lengthened their arduous wait. Sergeant Fernand St Laurent could wait no longer; he, then Scott shortly after, succumbed to exposure, their bodies consigned to the deep with quiet prayer and the disquieting realisation that space had opened on the raft. Hornell soon started to fade, too, by then blind and slipping into a coma. The Canadian flight lieutenant had given everything to keep most

of the crew alive. His efforts, and the efforts of all comrades, became apparent at 3.15pm when the rescue launch steamed up beside them. The six survivors had spent some 20 hours and 35 minutes adrift. Sadly, of those, just five made it home.

Despite resuscitation attempts, a comatose Hornell never awoke, dying within 20 minutes of being picked up by the rescue boat. Buried in Lerwick New Cemetery on the Shetland Islands, his bravery and sacrifice would earn him a posthumous Victoria Cross, later presented to his grieving widow, Genevieve, on 12 December 1944. His fellow crew members likewise received accolades for their respective exploits, with each survivor expressing gratitude for their late captain. Hornell's VC citation stated how "... this officer displayed valour and devotion to duty of the highest order", qualities still remembered today through numerous tributes to him: from a Toronto school named in his honour to a restored Canso dedicated to his legacy, Hornell's story continues to inspire.

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TOULON, FRENCH REPUBLIC
SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 1793

Great Battles



SIEGE OF TOULON

With the embers of the revolution still hot, France's key Mediterranean harbour was captured by royalist rebels, with British support. A Republican campaign to retake the port saw the rise of a young officer and another seismic shift in the nation's history

WORDS MICHAEL G STROUD



For a short period, the revolutionary fervour that swept France from 1789 remained a largely internal political affair, punctured occasionally with civil unrest as politicians set about dismantling the old regime to make room for a new nation. This all changed in 1792 with a cascade of geopolitical and domestic events, mass dissention, counter-revolutions, and declarations of war.

From the perceived threat of revolution spreading from France to its neighbours, galvanised a coalition, led chiefly by Prussia, Austria, England and Spain. This left France assailed by both internal and external enemies. The onslaught soon had the nation on its heels.

In August 1793 coalition and royalist armies pushed into Republican France on multiple fronts, while its armies reeled from numerous defeats. These, along with strong anti-Jacobin (the ruling Republican party) uprisings throughout the country, meant that the fragile republic was on a knife's edge. Matters became catastrophic with the raising of the royalist flag in Toulon on 27 August.

The revolt in Toulon was the result of heavy-handed leadership by Jacobin officials in their attempt to coerce the more moderate members of the city and the French Navy (as



The French Republican Army, led by Major General Jacques Coquille Dugommier, enters Toulon at the culmination of the siege

well as the over 6,000 dockyard workers at the naval arsenal) to their side. This alienation only served to infuriate and galvanise the moderates, who by 18 July had removed the Jacobins, formed a General Committee, before trying and publicly executing over 40 of them.

Toulon was a critical hub of France's naval power in the Mediterranean, housing the

bulk of its fleet as well as serving as a major weapons arsenal. The French Mediterranean Fleet at Toulon was a mixed bag at best. Led by interim commander, Rear-Admiral Jean Honoré Comte de Trogoff, he possessed 35 operational vessels that consisted of 19 ships-of-the-line, seven frigates and nine corvettes. The rest were not ready for action, which included four

“IN AUGUST 1793 COALITION AND ROYALIST ARMIES PUSHED INTO REPUBLICAN FRANCE ON MULTIPLE FRONTS, WHILE ITS ARMIES REELED FROM NUMEROUS DEFEATS”

The Royal Navy had been blockading the vital Mediterranean port for months, and the French were desperate to recapture it

OPPOSING FORCES

ALLIED DEFENDERS

VS

FRENCH REPUBLICAN ARMY

COMMANDERS

Sir Samuel Hood
Charles O'Hara
Juan de Lángara y Huarte
Federico Gravina
Lord Mulgrave

COMMANDERS

Jacques Coquille Dugommier
Major General Jean
François Carteau
Napoleon Buonaparte
Jean François Lapoype

INFANTRY/MARINES

c. 16,000

INFANTRY/MARINES

c. 39,624

CAVALRY

None

CAVALRY

c. 343

FLEET

81 ships

FLEET

60 ships

Siege of TOULON

19th December 1793



01 THE FRENCH ARRIVE

On 30 August, the French advance guard of 800 men occupies the village of Ollioules. The allies respond the next day with a sortie that costs the French eight killed, 30 prisoners, two cannon and two battalion colours.

02 NAPOLEON'S FIRST ATTACKS

Having set up two batteries called de la Montagne (five guns) and des Sans Culottes (two guns), Napoleon conducts limited shelling against the *Aurore*, HMS *St George* and the Spanish *San Juan Nepomuceno* in the inner harbour, to no effect.

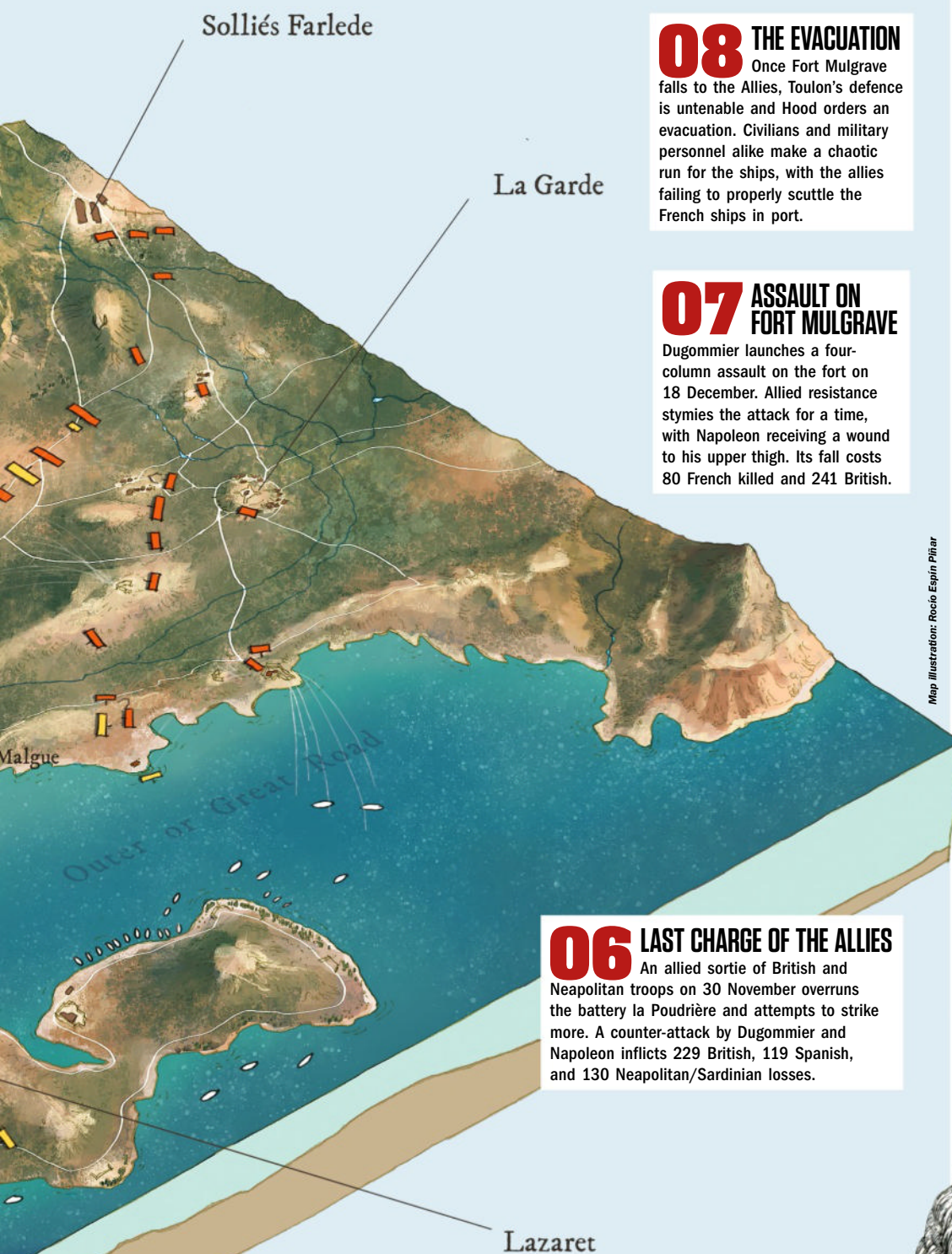
Six Fours

- French Army
- Allies Army
- Ships in the Roads
- Forts

La Seyne

03 ATTACK ON MOUNT FARON

Deemed to be the key to Toulon, Lapoye orders Gardanne to take Mount Faron with a 1,600-man force on 30 September. A counter-attack on 1 October by Lord Mulgrave, and poor leadership by Lapoye, allows for its recapture by 3:30pm.



08 THE EVACUATION

Once Fort Mulgrave falls to the Allies, Toulon's defence is untenable and Hood orders an evacuation. Civilians and military personnel alike make a chaotic run for the ships, with the allies failing to properly scuttle the French ships in port.

07 ASSAULT ON FORT MULGRAVE

Dugommier launches a four-column assault on the fort on 18 December. Allied resistance stymies the attack for a time, with Napoleon receiving a wound to his upper thigh. Its fall costs 80 French killed and 241 British.

06 LAST CHARGE OF THE ALLIES

An allied sortie of British and Neapolitan troops on 30 November overruns the battery la Poudrière and attempts to strike more. A counter-attack by Dugommier and Napoleon inflicts 229 British, 119 Spanish, and 130 Neapolitan/Sardinian losses.

04 THE ARTILLERY BUILD-UP

Napoleon orders the construction of more batteries, eventually resulting in 13 artillery positions. Between 26 and 38 artillery pieces (61 percent of his total) are focused against the strategically important Fort Mulgrave that the French have to take.

05 UNPLANNED ACTION AT FORT MULGRAVE

French pickets are captured by Spanish pickets near Fort Mulgrave on 15 November, which leads to an impromptu attack. O'Hara drives back the assault, with the French suffering 17 casualties, the English 62 and the Spanish 23.

"TOULON'S REBEL LEADERS QUICKLY REALISED THAT THEY NEEDED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IF THEY HAD ANY HOPE OF AVOIDING THE GUILLOTINE"

ships-of-the-line and one frigate that were being refitted, nine ships-of-the-line and nine frigates that were non-operational, and a ship-of-the-line and a frigate that were under construction.

The loss of this strategically important harbour was unacceptable and risked unravelling everything Jacobin France had established. So it came as no surprise to the General Committee in Toulon that the leadership in Paris promptly ordered an army to be assembled to retake it as soon as possible.

Toulon's rebel leaders quickly realised that they needed immediate assistance if they had any hope of avoiding the guillotine and so turned to the blockading British. The Royal Navy fleet, under the command of 68-year-old Vice Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, had been blockading the French port for months, so when the counter-revolutionaries in Toulon reached out for assistance, and after they swore allegiance to the Bourbons, Hood seized upon the opportunity and began landing troops in support, which initially included 1,200 marines and 200 sailors.

The British quickly occupied Fort Lamalgue and dispatched forces into the city. It soon became apparent to Hood, however, that he would need more men, and quickly, in order to secure the port and defend against the oncoming French. Calls for additional troops were sent to London (they would not receive his request until 7 September), as well as allies Spain, Sardinia, Austria and Naples. Only the Spanish would answer, with 12 ships-of-the-line and more than 3,000 troops under the command of Lieutenant General Don Juan de Lángara y Huarte.

The French, with the loss of multiple cities, had been shocked into action, quickly pulling together and mobilising an army to retake them. The French Army under the command of the 42-year-old former painter Major General Jean Francois Carteaux reclaimed Avignon

Major General Jean Francois Carteaux, despised by Napoleon, was reassigned to the Army of Italy

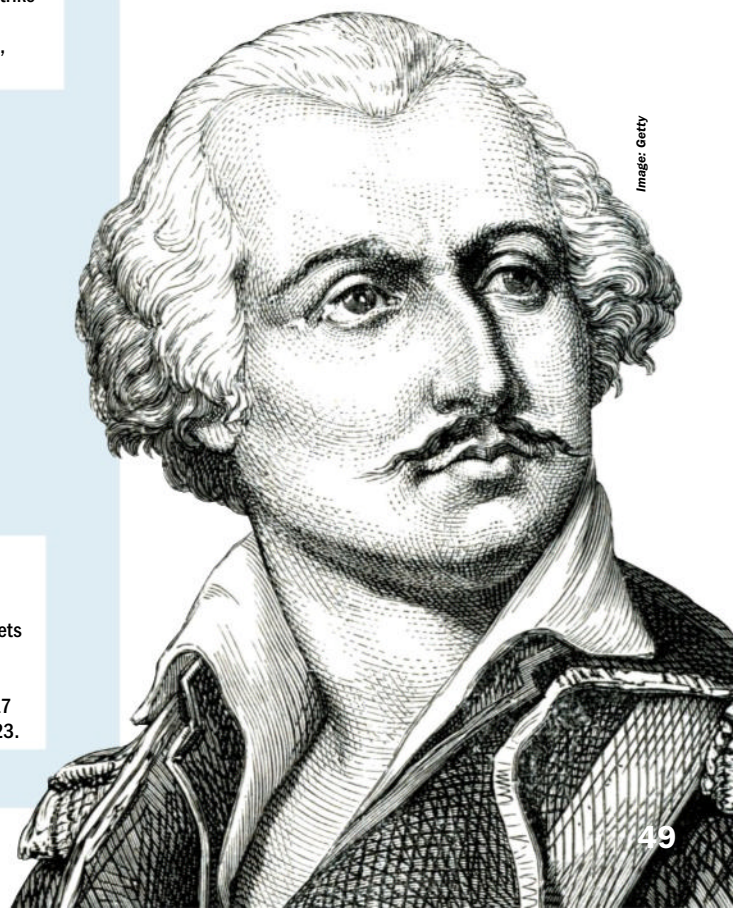


Image: Getty

and Marseilles before moving on to Toulon. Carteaux arrived at the city with around 5,000 infantry, 26 guns and a small cavalry force of 140 as a land force, since their fleet was bottled up at Toulon by the Allies. He was quickly supported by the arrival of Major General Jean Francois Lapoype and his 3,000 troops of mixed quality.

The siege commences

In the first week of September Carteaux moved his force of 5,000 in from the west, pushing out allied pickets and occupying the village of Ollioules. Lapoype with his 3,000 came from the eastern approach and occupied Hyères and Sollies. It was obvious to all that the French would have to lay siege to the port, but with his artillery commander seriously wounded at Ollioules, Carteaux needed a replacement.

The artillery and ammunition that Carteaux had at his disposal was less than intimidating, with a mere five batteries initially available consisting of two 24-pounders, two six-pounders, and an assortment of mortars and smaller field guns. Even so, the French continued to tighten the noose around Toulon as more reinforcements arrived, bringing the siege forces up to approximately 15,000, with more en route.

The matter of who would command the artillery would be resolved by 16 September, when, thanks to the urging of Antoine-Christophe Saliceti, a Corsican deputy to the National Assembly, the 24-year-old Napoleon Buonaparte (he maintained the Italian spelling of his name until 1796) was appointed.

“IN SHORT ORDER, THE FRENCH WERE ASSAILED ON THREE FRONTS, QUICKLY DESTROYING THEIR RESOLVE AND FORCING THEM OUT OF THEIR CAPTURED PRIZE”

Napoleon quickly assessed the tactical situation and recommended to Carteaux and Lapoype that they needed to take the small peninsula that was made up of Mount Caire and Point l'Eguillette as it would allow the French to shell the allied ships in the inner harbour, forcing them to withdraw.

Napoleon stated that “to become master of the harbour, one must become master of the Eguillette” and to do that meant he needed more artillery batteries. After much cajoling with Carteaux, he was allowed to do what he could to proceed, as both Carteaux and Lapoype had their own ideas as to how to take Toulon and paid little attention to the young officer.

Within 48 hours of Carteaux's approval, Napoleon had sent out teams to pull together all of the resources needed to construct two batteries on the western side of the inner harbour. Having named them de la Montagne and des Sans Culottes – favourable Jacobin names – Napoleon launched a short bombardment on 20 September (they were

extremely thin on ammunition) which caused no real damage. A failed infantry attack at La Caire several days later did nothing but alert the allies as to the significance of Point l'Eguillette.

Finally aware of its importance, British engineers were ordered by Colonel Lord Mulgrave (commander of the British troops only as there was no single allied ground commander, which would prove disastrous) to create a well-fortified earthwork on the hills overlooking the peninsula. Christened Fort Mulgrave by the British, it came to be known as le petit Gibraltar or ‘the little Gibraltar’ by the French for its imposing disposition and its deadly 20 heavy cannons (15 36-pounders and five 24-pounders) and four mortars.

The allies received additional forces in September to bolster the defence. Several battalions of Sardinian troops escorted by six ships and three battalions of 2,000 Neapolitan troops would bring the allied defenders to around 8-9,000 (including sailors) by 29 September, against 15,000 besieging French troops. Since the allies controlled the sea, there was no shortage of food, unlike a typical siege.

Lapoype was so adamant that Toulon should be attacked from the east that he launched his own assault beginning 30 September. He believed that the key to retaking the city lay in capturing the high ground that was Mount Faron, and set out to do just that. Having assembled a force of 1,600 men under Brigadier General Gaspard Gardanne, they made their way to the north side of the mountain and followed a little-known foot trail known as the Pas-de-la-Masque.



The allies had failed to properly garrison Mount Faron, only assigning a token force, as they felt its natural terrain would deter any major French assault. Under cover of heavy fog, elements of the French force led by Lieutenant Colonel Victor made their way up the path at 2:00am on the morning of 1 October, surprising a small 60-man British detachment at the top. Moving on, the French soon discovered – much to their surprise – that Fort Croix Faron had been abandoned by the 300 Spanish garrison.

Lapoype hurriedly sent the remaining troops to the top to join their comrades but failed to personally assess the situation. Instead, he went to extol his success to the committee representatives that were travelling with the army. Exhausted from the mountain climb and taking the summit, most of the French troops had fallen asleep, while also failing to put out adequate numbers of pickets.

When word reached the allies of the fall of Mount Faron, Mulgrave quickly made plans to retake it and assembled two columns by 8:00am. One column of 200 British and 380 Sardinians, commanded by himself, would approach from the east; the other, consisting of 200 Spanish, 100 Neapolitans, 200 mixed grenadiers and 56 Sardinian fusiliers, led by Rear-Admiral Gravina, would approach from the south of the mountain. In support from the south would be 150 British from the 30th and 69th Regiments and 100 French from the Royal Louis, under the command of Captain Elphinstone.

Upon seeing the allies forming, Victor pulled his men back to the eastern rim of Mount Faron, deploying them in a triangle formation.



This cartoon depicts Napoleon firing a canon during the siege. He was promoted to brigadier general soon after victory at Toulon

Allied 12-pounder fire continued to target the exposed French troops until the allied columns arrived. In short order, the French were assailed on three fronts, quickly destroying their resolve and forcing them out of their captured prize. By 3:30pm, Mount Faron was back under allied control, a victory which cost them nine killed and 69 wounded. The French saw 75 killed, 200-300 wounded and 61 captured.

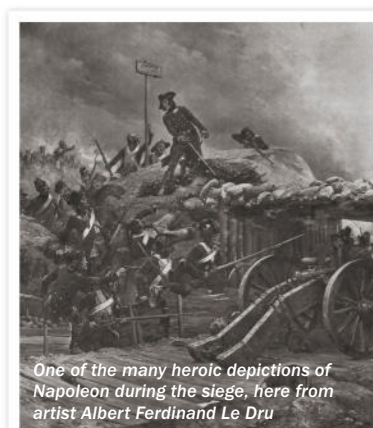
On 18 October, Napoleon was promoted to major, which did little to satiate his anger at the “crowd of fools [Carteaux and Lapoype predominately] on the staff with whom one has constantly to argue and lay down the

law in order to practise alike their prejudices and make them take steps which theory and practice alike have shown to be axiomatic to any trained officer of this corps”. He received a late birthday gift when Carteaux was reassigned to the Army of Italy on 23 October.

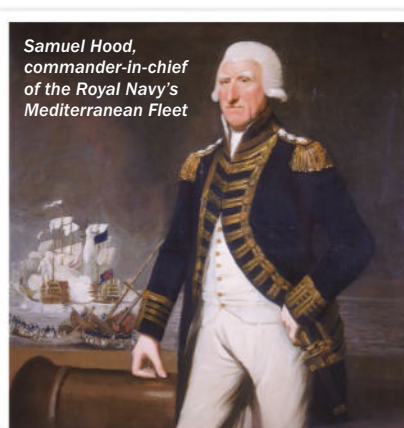
Major General Amédée Doppet, his replacement, quickly proved to be of no use either – he would be replaced within weeks by the capable Major General Jacques Coquille Dugommier, who would see the siege through to its conclusion. The allies also had a command shake-up with the arrival of Major General don Rafael Valdés on 18 October to

The siege saw a rare defeat of a British force by the French, and was the catalyst for a French military revival

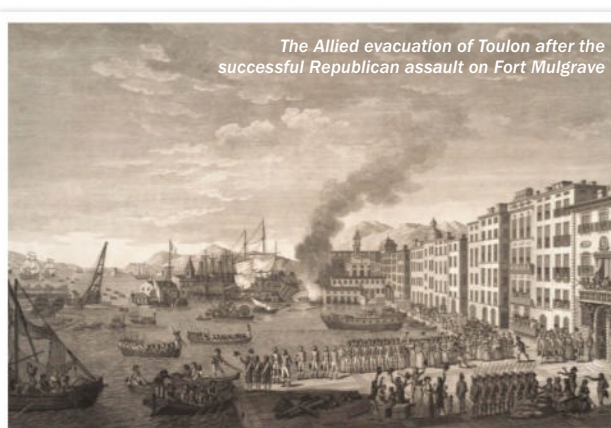




One of the many heroic depictions of Napoleon during the siege, here from artist Albert Ferdinand Le Dru



Samuel Hood, commander-in-chief of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet



The Allied evacuation of Toulon after the successful Republican assault on Fort Mulgrave

take command of all Spanish ground troops; then on 23 October Hood was notified that Rear Admiral Gravina had been appointed as commander-in-chief of all allied forces in Toulon. This was not well received as Hood and the other British troops refused to serve under a Spanish commander.

Days later, on 27 October, Mulgrave was replaced by Major General Charles O'Hara, with Major General David Dundas serving as his second-in-command. Allied reinforcements also arrived, which brought them up to around 16,000 consisting of 2,300 British, 6,500 Spanish, 4,300 Neapolitan, 1,500 Sardinian and 1,500 French rebels (though only 75 percent were available for duty). The French attacking forces also swelled, bringing their total strength up to around 25,000.

Napoleon kept expanding the construction of his artillery batteries, which grew to 13 by the end of November. His guns continued to shell allied ships within range. The duel between allied ships and Napoleon's guns had lasted weeks with little effect on either, but that changed when a French shot managed to damage an allied vessel, spooking the remaining vessels in the inner harbour to pull back out of range. This was perfect for the Republicans, as the ships could no longer provide fire support for Fort Mulgrave and, with Napoleon having constructed three batteries within 985ft (300m) of the fort, they could not direct massed fire into it.

Dugommier, after a council of war on 25 November, effectively settled on Napoleon's plan that he'd espoused ever since his arrival: a massed bombardment of the promontory defences, a dawn attack against Fort Mulgrave with a feint against Fort Faron, and then the creation of a battery on Point l'Eguillette from which they could attack the allied fleet.

The plan was interrupted on 30 November by the strongest allied sortie of the siege. 2,350 British and Neapolitan troops led by Dundas sortied out of Fort Malbousquet, hitting and overrunning the new French battery la Poudrière in the predawn hours. However, this success bred rashness, as the allied force then moved to take battery la Farinière, with some elements looking to raid the ammunition parks, causing the allied attackers to lose cohesion and order. Dugommier and Napoleon led the French counter-attack, which smashed into the Allied flank, repulsing it while inflicting over 400 killed and taking over 200 prisoners, including O'Hara and a host of other allied

“THE SPOILS OF WAR WERE OF LITTLE COMFORT TO THE ALLIES, WHO SUFFERED ROUGHLY 1,600 CASUALTIES AT TOULON”

officers at a cost of 50 French troops killed and 150 wounded.

Dugommier was determined to bring the siege to an end and ordered an assault on Fort Mulgrave on 17 December. A heavy bombardment of the fort ensued, followed by its fall to General Muiron and his 6,000 troops at a cost of 1,000 casualties. (Napoleon led the reserves forward when it appeared the attack was faltering.) The northeastern side of Toulon saw Lapoype and 4,000 troops take Mount Faron, with Brigadier General André Massena capturing Fort d'Artiques in the process. Within hours Napoleon secured Point l'Eguillette and the nearby Balaquier, at the cost of having his horse being shot out from under him and a bayonet wound to his thigh. He still directed the establishment of a battery of ten guns by late in the day on the 18th, ready to fire on allied ships.

The loss of Fort Mulgrave (for which the British blamed the Spanish), a crumbling defence that couldn't be held, no reinforcements and imminent bombardment by Napoleon's guns (which were now augmented by British artillery) left Hood and the allies with no choice but to evacuate Toulon. Dugommier and his Republican French troops made their way into the city and effectively took it over by 9:00am on 19 December.

Aftermath

The allied evacuation of Toulon was chaotic. Hood, after a months-long siege, had no clear plan to scuttle the French ships that were bottled up in the inner harbour. The resulting haphazard effort saw the destruction of nine French ships-of-the-line, three frigates and two corvettes; much to the surprise and delight of the victorious French, they discovered 14 ships-of-the-line, one frigate and three corvettes still intact.

Hood and the allies took almost 7,500 civilians from the city, as well as numerous French ships, including four ships-of-the-

line, seven frigates and five corvettes. But the spoils of war were of little comfort to the allies, who suffered roughly 1,600 casualties at Toulon. The British losses were about 700, with 150 killed, 280 wounded and 270 captured. The Spanish contingent for their part endured 1,240 casualties, with 200 killed, 640 wounded and 400 missing. The Neapolitan and Sardinian elements lost around 100 casualties and a further 1,000 who were abandoned during the evacuation. The French suffered 500 killed and 1,200 wounded, with disease and other non-combat factors reducing the combat troop strength of all by around 25 percent.

Once the French secured the city, reprisals began almost immediately with the rounding up of those deemed traitors to the revolution. Hundreds were gathered up, with some given a speedy show trial and others summarily executed. During Toulon's Reign of Terror more than 300 were shot without trial and 282 executed by guillotine. Among those were 27 rebel officers, 134 soldiers, 13 sailors, 11 priests, 78 artisans, 21 merchants, 20 clerks and 24 women. There are conflicting reports as to the 'Massacre of Toulon'. Some, such as Napoleon, stated that there was no massacre while others, such as British captain Sir William Sidney-Smith, said the opposite. Smith in fact mentions how Napoleon played a direct role in the executions when he "fired upon the people and mowed them down like grass".

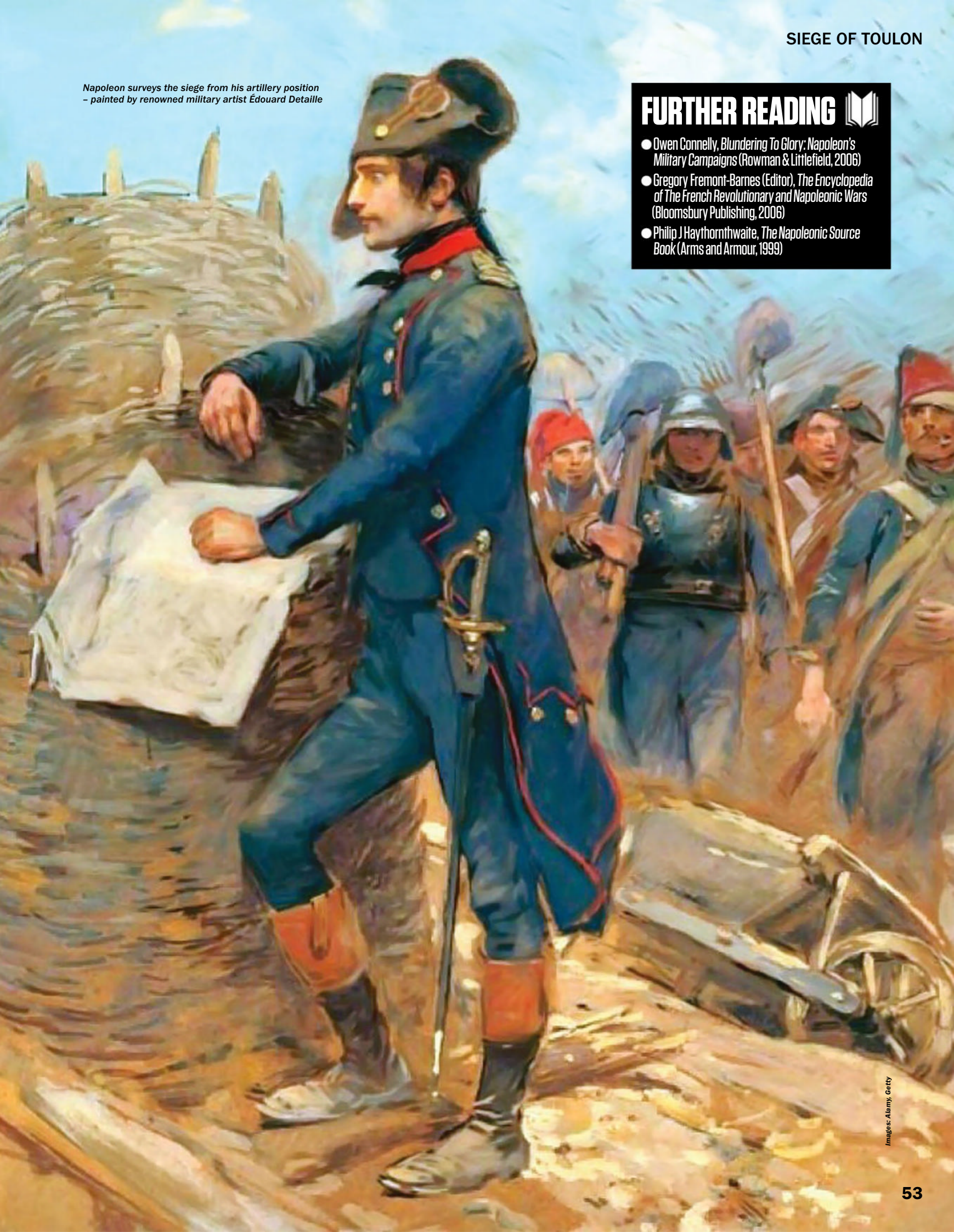
Wherever the truth lies, Napoleon's skill was recognised after his performance at Toulon, as was evidenced by Dugommier, who said: "Even if this officer were not given his due, he would make his mark all on his own." Napoleon was promoted to brigadier general not long after, on 22 December.

The Siege of Toulon was a rare British defeat by a French army during the period. Even more critical were the combined arms lessons learned and the revitalisation of the French military, including its naval forces in the Mediterranean. In fact, many of the reconstituted ships at Toulon would later serve Napoleon in his foray to Egypt. Though it would be a further two years until Napoleon's star truly began to rise (the infamous "whiff of grapeshot" in October 1795), the victory at Toulon brought to the fore a man who knew how to leverage political connections to his benefit, while believing: "It is the artillery that takes places; the infantry can only aid it."

Napoleon surveys the siege from his artillery position
– painted by renowned military artist Édouard Detaille

FURTHER READING

- Owen Connelly, *Blundering To Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006)
- Gregory Fremont-Barnes (Editor), *The Encyclopedia of The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006)
- Philip J Haythornthwaite, *The Napoleonic Source Book* (Arms and Armour, 1999)

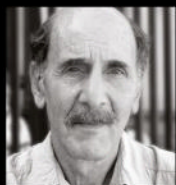


WHAT IF...

FRANCO HAD JOINED THE AXIS?

A Spain joined with Germany would have ruined the Allied campaign in the Middle East, but doomed the Francoist state to an earlier collapse

INTERVIEW WITH



Jules Stewart

Jules is a veteran journalist and has reported from over 30 countries, including Spain, where he worked for 20 years. He has written 12 books on a range of subjects, including the cultural and literary histories of Madrid.

As Hitler's army marched into Poland on 1 September 1939, beginning the Second World War, the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco struggled to consolidate power in Madrid. His Nationalist Army had been heavily reliant on Nazi arms, tanks and planes to gain victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), yet Franco did not fall in with the rest of fascist Europe to support the German war effort, instead taking a cautious and relatively neutral approach. The prospect of Spain joining the war remained a concern for the Allies throughout the conflict, terrified by the prospect of losing control of Gibraltar and, as a result, the Mediterranean.

What was the relationship between Francoist Spain and Nazi Germany during and after the Spanish Civil War?

The first and only personal encounter between Francisco Franco and Adolf Hitler took place at the Hendaye railway station in German-occupied France in October 1940. A frustrated Hitler later told Benito Mussolini that he would rather have several teeth extracted than endure another meeting with Franco. Hitler had travelled to Hendaye to assess the impact that building a closer relationship with Spain might have on stability in Vichy France. No agreement was reached, simply because Hitler could not accept Franco's demands for handing over to Spain large parts of the French North African empire. That said, Hitler clearly saw Franco as a useful ally for increasing pressure on Britain and diverting part of the enemy's war efforts to the threat of hostilities with Spain.

The Nazis had provided Spain with arms, tanks, troops and Luftwaffe air support during the Spanish Civil War that effectively ensured a Nationalist victory. The Germans had been eager to test new equipment in the field and Spain also provided a convenient sideshow to distract Britain and France from Germany's skulduggery in Eastern Europe. After Franco's victory, in 1941 the Generalissimo approved the recruitment of Spanish volunteers to Germany on the guarantee that they only fight

against the Soviet Union and not the Western Allies. Once the tide of war started to turn against the Axis, Franco, with a wink and a nod, cleverly adopted a policy of 'strict neutrality'.

Was Franco invited or pressured to join the Axis alliance prior to the outbreak of the Second World War? And why did Spain remain neutral?

Franco's gambit was always to err on the side of caution. Hitler became aware from the outset that the Generalissimo might play the role of a useful sympathiser to the Nazi cause, one worthy of material aid during the Spanish Civil War, but he held out little or no hope of recruiting the country as a belligerent in the European conflict. Franco set far too high a price on joining the Axis and the best Hitler could hope for was a policy of political support from an anti-Bolshevist bulwark south of the Pyrenees. Franco embraced a strategy of ideological support for Germany, while cautiously putting out the message that the Allies would not have to confront a Spanish army in the European war. Maintaining neutrality was essential if the government was to concentrate on rebuilding a country shattered by three years of internal

Below: Franco at a Condor Legion parade to celebrate victory in the civil war





THE PAST

1939

FRANCOIST VICTORY IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

On 1 April 1939, Franco's forces entered Madrid and declared victory. However, three years of brutal civil war left Spain impoverished and the new Francoist state was locked in a struggle for survival. After the civil war Franco was also forced to substantially reduce his military might, cutting three-quarters of the Nationalist Army to free up men to rebuild the shattered nation. What remained of the armed forces was reluctant to become involved in the Second World War, with a much of its leadership vehemently opposed to military intervention.

1939-45

DEPENDENCY ON THE ALLIES

Britain created a network of economic mutual interest with Spain, meaning Spain would face economic destitution if it cut ties with the Allies. Britain ensured

Spain could only receive essential products from the Allies and the US. This economic reality prevented Spain from taking meaningful action against the

Allies and Hitler had to settle with using Spain as an anti-communist bulwark to the south. Meanwhile, Spanish military leadership received bribes from Churchill totalling \$13 million to ensure neutrality.

1939-45

DENYING THE WEHRMACHT MILITARY ACCESS

Germany was keen to take Gibraltar to enhance Axis power in the Mediterranean, so the Nazis attempted to negotiate with the Spanish regime to use the country as an invasion route. The Generalissimo briefly contemplated ways to covertly allow the Wehrmacht through Spanish territory, but quickly dropped the idea. Franco refused to allow the Wehrmacht access, knowing that any such collaboration with the Nazis would drag Spain into the war.

Members of the Hitler Youth visit the ruins of the Alcazar in Toledo, 1941



destruction that had left Spain impoverished, with widespread hunger among its people and its economy in ruins.

How much concern was there among the Allied nations that Spain would enter the war, even in a limited way?

There is no evidence of any undue concern among the Allies that Spain would enter the war on the Nazi side. Hitler's failure to bring Britain to its knees and open the country to invasion during the blitzkrieg, along with the German Army's disaster in Russia, made it obvious that the war's outcome was by no means a foregone conclusion. Yet it was imperative to take all possible measures to prevent Spain becoming a belligerent.

From the beginning of the conflict the Allies, mainly Great Britain, deployed a number of policies to prevent closer relations between the Axis and Spain, thereby limiting the likelihood of entry in the war. The Allies created a system of incentives to condition Spanish policy decisions. The British focused on building a network of mutual interests, thanks to which any break-up between the two countries would mean a key loss for Spanish trade and industry. This was a key factor in conditioning Spanish movements in the war. With the economic agreements in force between Spain and the UK from the autumn of 1940, Spain received products essential to its economic survival, which could only be obtained from Britain and the US. In a word, Spain became inescapably dependent on British and Western Hemispheric sources of supply.

What was the state of the Spanish military at the outbreak of the Second World War?

At the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, Franco's Nationalist Army consisted of roughly

one million troops in 60 divisions. The need to free up workers and farmers to rebuild the country was a key factor in Franco's decision to dramatically reduce the size of the Spanish armed forces to some 250,000 men, most of them two-year conscripts.

Once the Second World War broke out, Franco was obliged to consider his country's position vis-à-vis the two sides, as well as the threat of invasion from the Allies or even Germany if Hitler decided to take control of his country. Thus Franco decided to reverse some of the military cutbacks. In 1942, alarmed by the Allied landings in North Africa and the German occupation of Vichy France bringing hostilities closer to the Pyrenees, the Generalissimo ordered a partial mobilisation, which raised the number of troops to more than 750,000 men. The air force and navy were also strengthened, albeit for financial restrictions less dramatically than the land forces.

If Franco had allied Spain with the Axis, was there a possibility that he could have taken Gibraltar? How might its loss have affected Allied operations in the Mediterranean?

In a letter written in February 1941 to Franco, Hitler said that an attack on Gibraltar and the closing of the Strait would have changed the Mediterranean situation in one stroke. The Führer was not alone in this assessment.

Winston Churchill went to great pains to ensure that the Rock remained in British hands during the war. If Britain could not be crushed by aerial bombardment then the enemy must be strangled into submission. That meant closing the Strait of Gibraltar. With the fall of Gibraltar, the Axis would have obtained control of the whole Mediterranean, cut off the British Army in the Middle East and closed a whole future theatre of war. It would have dashed hopes of an ultimate Allied



Hitler would not countenance Franco's demands for large parts of French North African territory

victory. Churchill came up with one of the most audacious gambits of the war: the distribution of \$13 million in bribes to top-ranking Spanish military figures, who would ensure that Franco adhered to his commitment to neutrality, if necessary by launching a coup d'état.

In all, eight top-echelon officials and a number of well-placed lower ranks were drawn into the operation. The bribes served their purpose: the recipients neutralised hardliners in the military ranks and Churchill could breathe easier.

What, if any, contribution might Franco's forces have made to the Nazi invasion of France? Could it have operated independently or might Spanish territory have been a staging ground for a third invasion route?

Franco never displayed an interest in taking control of French territory, especially once it became obvious that Spain was not going to be granted possession of France's North African territories. The Generalissimo decided unwaveringly against sanctioning a German army crossing into Spain. The Nazis wanted to use the country as an invasion route to Gibraltar, but Franco knew this would have left Spain open to attack by the Allies. He did

"HAD HITLER SCORED A VICTORY IN BRITAIN OR RUSSIA, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT FRANCO WOULD HAVE DEPLOYED TROOPS TO THE PYRENEES TO ACT AS A BACK-UP FOR GERMAN UNITS"

contemplate at one point secretly allowing the Wehrmacht access and then raising a diplomatic protest, but this whimsical idea was summarily discarded once it became clear that a German victory was by no means assured. Had Hitler scored a victory in Britain or Russia, it is possible that Franco would have deployed troops to the Pyrenees to act as a back-up for German units. Moreover, there were a significant number of high-ranking Spanish Army officials who strongly opposed Spain's entry into the war.

How might entry into the Axis alliance have affected Spain internally? Would it have risked destabilising the country? Was there a risk of a second civil war or an Allied-backed insurgency against Franco?

Had Spain joined the Second World War as an Axis ally, the outcome in the short term would have been catastrophic for the country. Franco was faced with a dire internal situation of near economic collapse, demoralisation and an infrastructure that had been all but destroyed after three years of civil war.

With the armed forces fully in control, there was no risk of a second civil war, yet the country could ill-afford to get involved in another armed conflict. In the longer term, however, the consequences would have been beneficial, in as much as it would have spelt the end of the Franco regime, as was the case with the Italian and German dictatorships. Spain would have avoided all the post-war years, until Franco's death in 1975, of political ostracism by the nations of Europe. Spain would have participated in the reconstruction of Europe and become a member of the United Nations and eventually the Common Market. Instead, an increasingly inept dictator kept the country under his tyrannical thumb for 40 years.

THE POSSIBILITY

1939

AXIS CONTROL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Had Spain joined the war, the British defenders of Gibraltar would have been in an impossible position and soon would have lost control. The Strait of Gibraltar would have closed, cutting off the British Army in the Middle East. Now isolated from the rest of the Allied forces, the nature of the Middle Eastern front would have fundamentally changed and Allied victory would have been unlikely.

1939-45

SPANISH ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

With Franco now an Axis ally, Britain and the US would have cut economic ties. Repairing Spain's ruined economy and infrastructure would have been nearly impossible, with the country relying heavily on whatever aid it could get from Germany. However, a second civil war would have been highly unlikely regardless of how difficult the situation became because the Republican Army had been crushed in 1939.



1945

THE END OF FRANCOIST SPAIN

After the defeat of the Axis powers, the Spanish dictatorship would collapse alongside Mussolini and Hitler's regimes.

Instead of suffering under Francoist rule until 1975, Spain could have become part of the post-war European reconstruction. It may have joined the United Nations in 1945 and the European Common Market in 1957.

ARYAN RACERS

THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOTOR CORPS

During the 1930s, the nascent Nazi regime created a motoring organisation designed to show off Germany's engineering achievements, as well as the high-speed skills of its drivers and riders

WORDS DUNCAN EVANS

Motor racing was one of the glamour sports of the 1930s and German drivers were at the forefront of the pinnacle of the sport, the Grand Prix. Rudolf Caracciola won a trio of driver's championships in 1935, 1937 and 1938 while Bernd Rosemeyer cemented this domination with the 1936 Grand Prix European Championship. One of the reasons for German success was that Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) believed in promoting motoring as a way of modernising the country, along with the clear military benefit of engine and vehicle development.

The first NSDAP motoring organisation itself was called the National Socialist Automobile Corps (Nationalsozialistisches Automobilkorps, or NSAK), which Hitler made an official party organisation on 1 April 1930 while also forcing all other German motoring organisations to amalgamate with it. The Party had, in fact, been using motor transport for years, to move members and propaganda materials around.

The newly formed NSAK was put in charge of the various vehicles that the NSDAP had bought, or had received as donations from

supporters and Party members, while Adolf Hühnlein was made Corps Leader (Korpsführer). Hühnlein was 51 and a former soldier who had been working in the car tyre industry. Unsurprisingly, he was an early convert to the NSDAP cause. The NSAK effectively became a motorized element of the Sturmabteilung (SA), deploying the brown shirts around Germany for rallies and providing protection

Swedish rider Ragnar Ragge Sunnqvist leads at the 1935 German Grand Prix





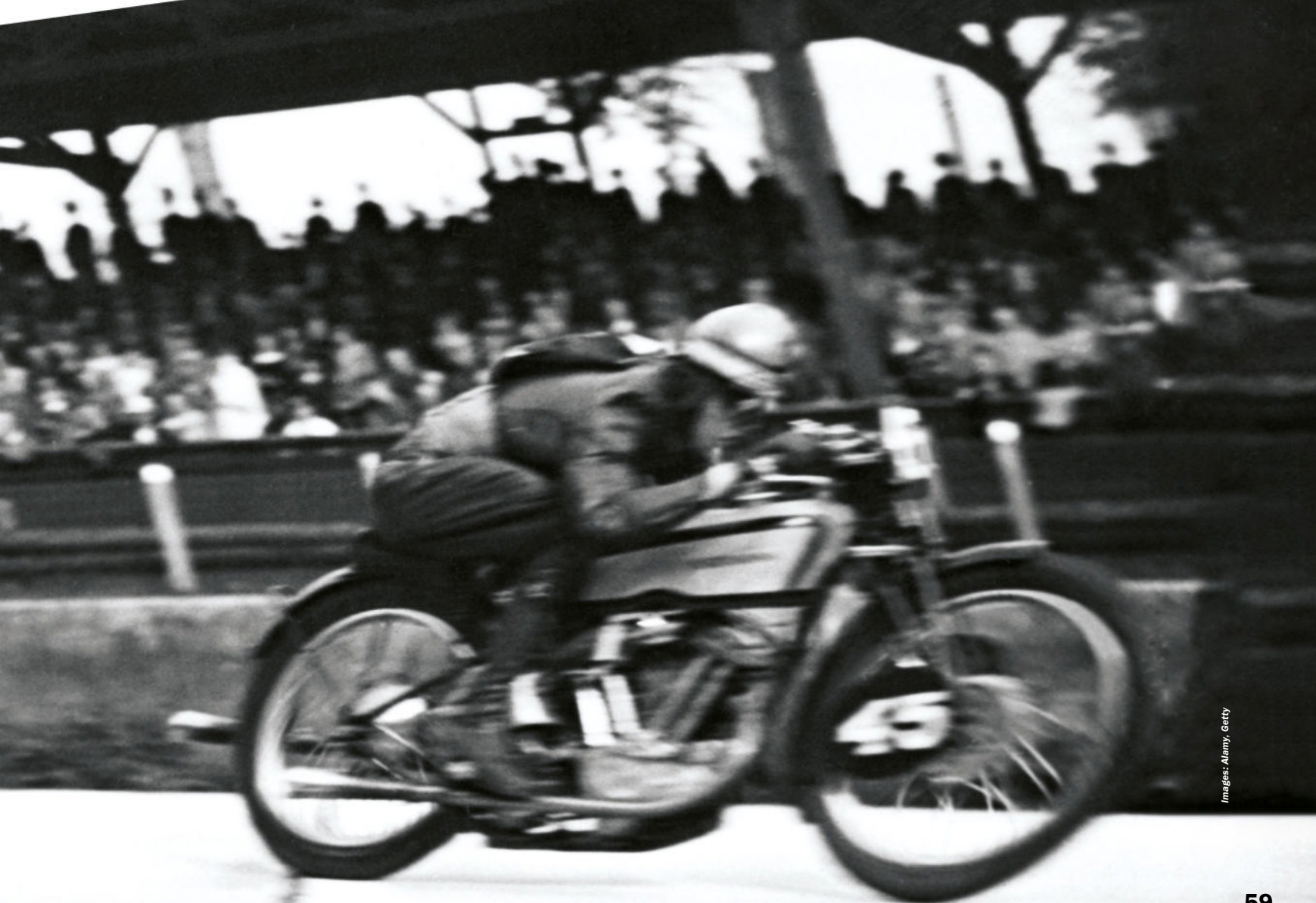
Above: Adolf Hitler breaks ground for the autobahn section between Frankfurt and Mannheim



Above: A rider gets stuck in the mud during a NSKK Motor Group cross-country race, 1938



Above: Racing cars on the starting grid, German Grand Prix, Nurburgring, 1934



at Party meetings. However, Hitler had other plans for the organisation. These started a year later, on 1 May 1931, two years before becoming Chancellor, when the NSAK was renamed as the National Socialist Motor Corps (Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps, or NSKK) which then adopted its own system of paramilitary ranks, uniforms and regalia, though they were heavily based on the SA.

With all other motoring organisations now banned, and motoring becoming increasingly popular, membership began a rapid, upwards trajectory from a modest 30,000 in April 1933. As an official Party organisation though, German Jews were banned from joining and the applicants had to prove they had no Jewish relatives as well as demonstrate their loyalty to Hitler. Surprisingly, those joining the NSKK didn't actually need to own their own car or be able to drive as driving lessons were provided.

In the 1920s, owning a car and driving was mainly a pursuit for the wealthy, but Hitler needed a country fit for modern warfare, and that included armoured cars and panzers. The problem was that while in the USA there was a car for every three people, in Germany the ratio was one car for every 47 people. Even the British could boast a better ownership ratio, with one car for every 14 people. Consequently when the Heer began to develop the Panzerwaffe, its own tank force, there was a dire shortage of drivers and engineers. Hitler had to do something to change this, so removed the tax on buying cars, began the programme of building the autobahn (there were a couple of national roads already, but this was to significantly increase the network) and developed the Volkswagen Beetle, the inexpensive, mass-produced car for the average German.

At the centre of this drive to modernise sat the NSKK where members were given the job of directing traffic in major towns and cities and local branches were called upon to provide roadside assistance, just like the British AA (Automotive Association). During the 1936

Olympics held in Berlin, it was NSKK members who were behind the wheel, driving visiting officials and VIPs around the venues and hotels. The organisation itself was charged with putting on glamorous motor racing events, designed to boost interest in both cars and motoring.

On the international scene, the NSKK took control of the German Grand Prix races and it was NSKK leader Hühnlein himself who presented the winners with their trophy. The ceremonies were elaborate, swathed in Nazi iconography and watched by huge crowds. In order to compete all German racing drivers were obliged to become members of the NSKK, if not the NSDAP itself. The internationally successful German racing car drivers like Caracciola and Rosemeyer became hugely popular celebrities in their home country. When Rosemeyer met and married the famous aviator, Ely Beinhorn, Hitler's propaganda machine went into overdrive, hailing them as the ideal German celebrity couple.

By 1935, Hitler's aim of re-armament was in full swing and the NSKK members were now given the additional role of training the panzer and transport drivers of the Wehrmacht. Acclaimed tank theory specialist and blitzkrieg advocate Heinz Guderian got onboard and together he and Hühnlein created a network of 21 training centres where NSKK drivers and engineers trained the Wehrmacht to operate and maintain their vehicles. And there were an awful lot of them, with everything from panzers and armoured cars to trucks, motorbikes and jeeps. Guderian got on well with Hühnlein, even describing him as, "A decent, upright man with whom it was easy to work."

Meanwhile, in 1936, back in the public arena, as well as the race meetings and international Grand Prix events, Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels came up with the idea of Speed Week.

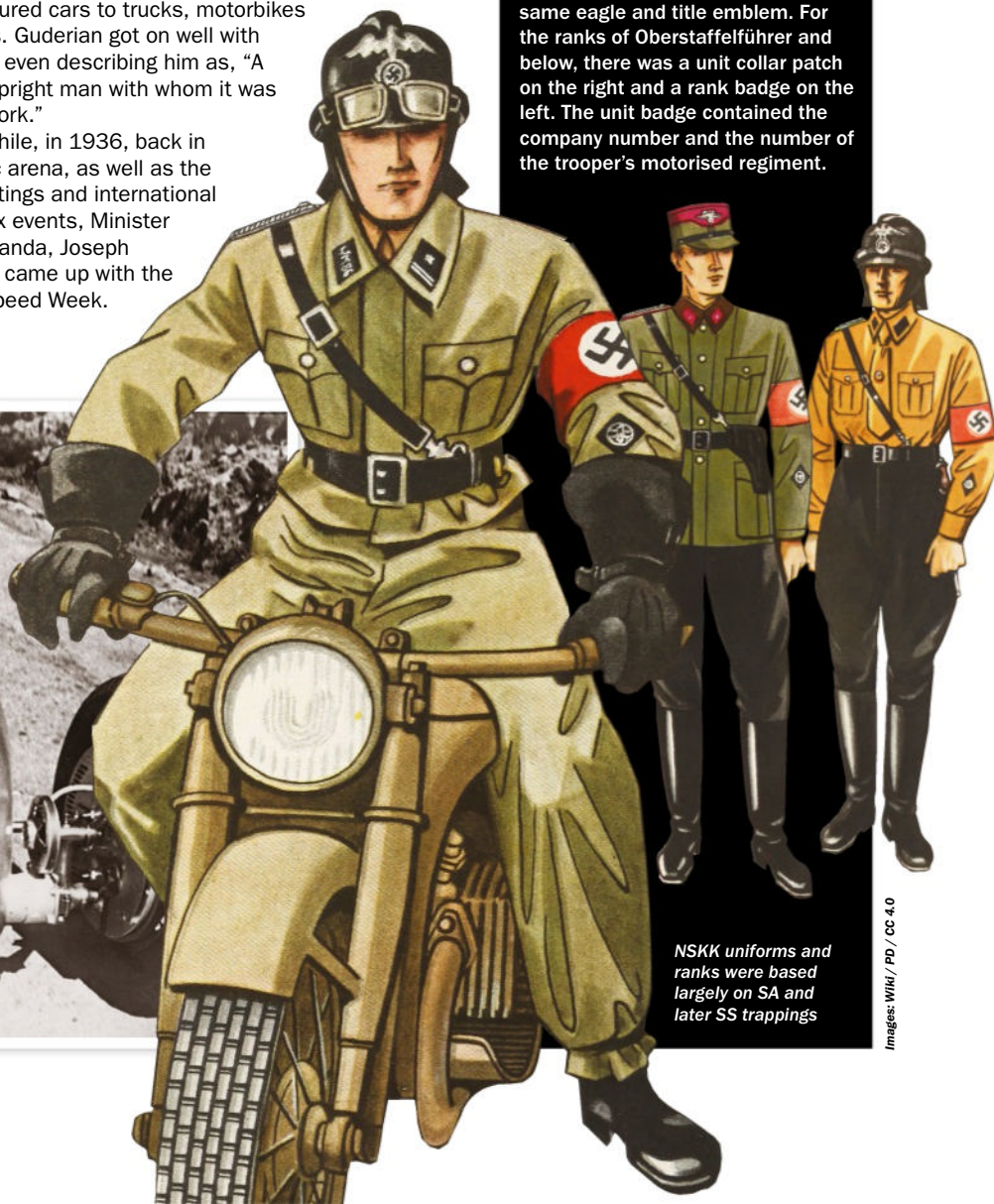
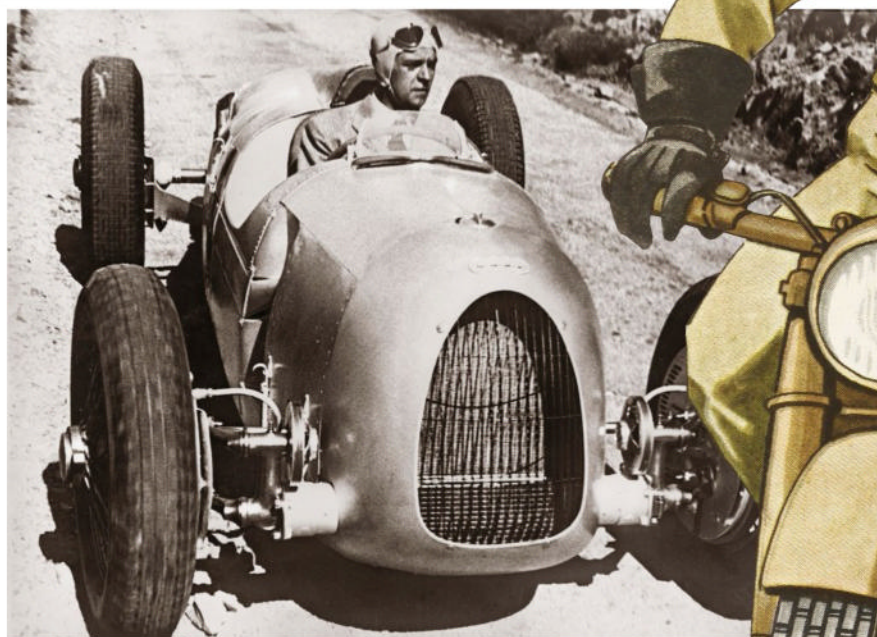


UNIFORM

The standard uniform for NSKK members was black trousers and boots, brown shirt and brown tie, a black patrol duty helmet or a brown kepi with black band and the NSKK emblem, and the usual swastika armband. There was also a leather crash helmet with the NSKK title, and a German eagle, or Adler, holding a swastika and a black field cap with the same title and logo.

After the outbreak of the war, there was also a brown visor cap for officers, featuring a cockade and the same eagle and title emblem. For the ranks of Oberstaffelführer and below, there was a unit collar patch on the right and a rank badge on the left. The unit badge contained the company number and the number of the trooper's motorised regiment.

Below: Renowned German racer Bernd Rosemeyer pictured in 1936



NSKK uniforms and ranks were based largely on SA and later SS trappings

Hitler pictured at
the Berlin Motor
Show, 1938

RANKS OF THE CORPS

The Motor Corps' structure was based on the Nazi Sturmabteilung

KORPSFÜHRER
Corps leader



OBERGRUPPENFÜHRER
Senior group leader



GRUPPENFÜHRER
Group leader



BRIGADEFÜHRER
Brigade leader



OBERFÜHRER
Senior leader



STANDARTENFÜHRER
Regiment leader



OBERSTAFFELFÜHRER
Senior squadron leader



STAFFELFÜHRER
Squadron leader



HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER
Chief assault leader



OBERSTURMFÜHRER
Senior assault leader



STURMFÜHRER
Assault leader



HAUPTTRUPPFÜHRER
Head troop leader



OBERTRUPPFÜHRER
Senior troop leader



TRUPPFÜHRER
Troop leader



OBERSCHARFÜHRER
Senior squad leader



SCHARFÜHRER
Squad leader



ROTTENFÜHRER
Section leader



STURMMANN
Storm trooper



MANN
Trooper



"BY 1935, HITLER'S AIM OF RE-ARMAMENT WAS IN FULL SWING AND THE NSKK MEMBERS WERE NOW GIVEN THE ADDITIONAL ROLE OF TRAINING THE PANZER AND TRANSPORT DRIVERS OF THE WEHRMACHT"

CORPS COLLECTIONS

As the NSKK was originally a paramilitary organisation, prices for collectables aren't as inflated as, for example, the Waffen-SS or Luftwaffe. There's a variety of items you can look for at dealers and auction houses, including arm patches and armbands, helmets, insignia and dress daggers. The daggers follow the same basic design as the other dress daggers for NSDAP organisations, with wooden handles, scabbard and 'Alles für Deutschland' (All for Germany) inscribed on the blade. The driver's nickel-plated tombak insignia, from 1934-39, is an item that is hard to find with high prices and so has been faked – if the eagle looks more like a parrot, it's a fake.

Something like an NSKK driver's sleeve patch, machine embroidered in silver on black felt is fairly easy to find. Other items to look out for include member's stick pins; the metal eagle for the hats, made from tombak for the early war and pre-war years and aluminium from later; and pennants, with the logo on a red cloth body.



An example of a NSKK dress dagger with scabbard

Images: Alamy, Getty



Above: Josef Goebbels inspects a line of NSKK motorcycle riders, October 1937



Above: Hitler greets renowned motorcycle racer Ernst Henne during the 1939 International Motor Show

This was a way of encouraging competition between Rosemeyer's Auto Union team and Caracciola's Mercedes-Benz team and to showcase German engineering. The Speed Week took place between the Grand Prix seasons and ran until 1938 at which point all pretence of peaceful motoring development was put aside. The idea was that both Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz would try to record the fastest possible speed over a quarter-mile stretch of Hitler's pride and joy, the new public autobahn network. The winning car and team would be celebrated by the Führer himself.

The cars developed during this period were designed in wind tunnels originally used for testing zeppelins and looked like precursors of the space age. They were years ahead of anything the German public or international race car fans had ever seen before. The Auto Union V16 Streamliner was the first ever ground-effect race car, a design not replicated until the Lotus 79 Formula 1 car just over 40 years later. But that still wasn't fast enough, as the Mercedes-Benz W125 Rekordwagen, driven by Rudolf Caracciola, set a jaw-dropping world record and public road speed record of 268.9mph in 1938, which wasn't bested until 2017. It was this heated competition, however, that led to the death of Caracciola's fierce rival Rosemeyer, later that year, when he crashed attempting a record speed run on the Frankfurt to Darmstadt stretch of autobahn.

The glamour and interest in motoring had well and truly been ignited in Germany and the membership of the NSKK rocketed as a result. By 1938 the NSKK was providing transport services to the giant Organization Todt (OT), starting with classified documents and paperwork, but soon including delivering materials and men to the 22,000 construction sites making up the Siegfried Line that the OT was building. When Hitler made the NSKK solely responsible for training the military in motor-vehicle and panzer driving matters the organisation boasted nearly half a million members and by the eve of Second World War it had already trained 200,000 men at the facilities set up by Hühnlein and Guderian.

Racers go to war

At the outbreak of war, the NSKK was no longer an innocent motoring organisation, but an essential component of Hitler's armed forces. Its membership of skilled drivers and mechanics was viewed as a valuable resource to be called upon and units were formed in their own right to support the troops at the front. The Luftwaffe bagged two brigades of NSKK members to support the airfields, supplies and delivery of replacement parts and men. Those seconded to the Luftwaffe wore grey-blue uniforms, rather than the brown of the regular organisation. As the Wehrmacht swarmed into Eastern Europe in Operation

The NSKK training school at Döberitz in the 1930s with a role call for motorcycle riders





Above: Hitler and Korpsführer Adolf Hühnlein pictured at the International Motor Show



Above: The general rally of the National Socialist Motor Corps, 16 January 1936

Barbarossa NSKK members were there as vital support infrastructure. The nature of the fighting in the East meant that they were often the target of partisan attacks so were required to defend themselves, vehicles and equipment if necessary. The NSKK drivers and trucks were so important in delivering supplies and re-enforcements across the vast distances of the Soviet Union that Gerd von Rundstedt of Army Group South demanded an entire brigade of NSKK personnel and vehicles be allocated to him.

The NSKK was now everywhere, supporting the Heer, Luftwaffe and Organization Todt where NSKK staff became members of Transportbrigade Todt, split across the occupied territories. If the Wehrmacht needed drivers and trucks, the NSKK was there, with groups being formed and covering the Austrian Alps, East Prussia, Bavaria and with even foreign sections being set up. The first were the Belgian Flemish and the Dutch, with over 4,000 of the latter signing up. These wore the Luftwaffe uniform but with NSKK rank epaulettes and an arm badge identifying their country of origin. French sympathisers were recruited, becoming an

official company in 1942, numbering 200 men, expanding to 2,000 by the end of the war. The French NSKK had their own arm badges and the tricolour of the national flag on their uniforms. They also had their own driving and training establishment based at Melun in the Seine-et-Marne département.

Korpsführer Adolf Hühnlein didn't get to see out the war, as he died from cancer in Munich on 18 June 1942. Such was his devotion to the Party and the importance that the NSKK had taken on, he was awarded a state funeral where Hitler laid a wreath on the coffin and Reich Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, delivered the eulogy. Hühnlein was succeeded by Erwin Kraus.

The end was coming though. After the disaster at Stalingrad, setbacks in North Africa, it was the Allied invasion of Northern France on D-Day that started the disintegration of the NSKK. With Germany desperate for fighting manpower, the drivers

and mechanics of the former motoring organisation were used to fill the ranks of the Heer's panzer and infantry divisions. For those foreign volunteers who had been wearing the Luftwaffe grey-blue, it meant putting on the field-grey and camouflage of the Waffen-SS, with the inevitable harsh treatment that entailed from the Allies if they surrendered. The French NSKK were sent to Ulm in southern Germany or drafted into the 33rd SS-Division Charlemagne which was used to defend the Reich Chancellery in Berlin from the rampaging Soviets. After Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered, the NSKK was disbanded, like all NSDAP-affiliated paramilitaries and subsequently banned because of its adherence to the deplorable racial policies it had been only too happy to follow.



FURTHER READING

- *The NSKK of the NSDAP: The Original 1944 SHAEF Study* – Naval & Military Press
- *NSKK/NSFK: Uniforms, Organisation and History* (Angolia/Littlejohn), Bender Publishing
- Also, see www.thirdreichmedals.com

FAIREY SWORDFISH

WORDS STUART HADAWAY

Take a look inside the Royal Navy's legendary 'Stringbag',
which even outlived its own successor

FOLDING WINGS

The wings folded back close to the fuselage, allowing the Swordfish to be moved around and stored in small carriers with ease.

DEADLY LOAD

The outer lower wing (strengthened from the Mk II) could hold a wide range of pyrotechnics and ordnance, including rockets.

EXCELLENT CONTROL

The upper wings were larger than the lower and swept back to shift the centre of gravity. Slats on the leading edge could be pushed out to aid low-speed control, while ailerons at the back also acted as dive brakes.





A formation of Swordfish takes part in the Coronation Review, Spithead, 1937

The Fairey Swordfish entered service with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm (FAA) in 1936. Already slow and outdated by modern standards, a requirement was issued in the same year for a replacement. The Swordfish would finally leave service in May 1945, 18 months after the withdrawal of its 'replacement'. The antiquated Swordfish had proven an exceptional weapon of war.

Known affectionately as the 'Stringbag', because just as a string shopping bag could hold almost anything so the Swordfish could

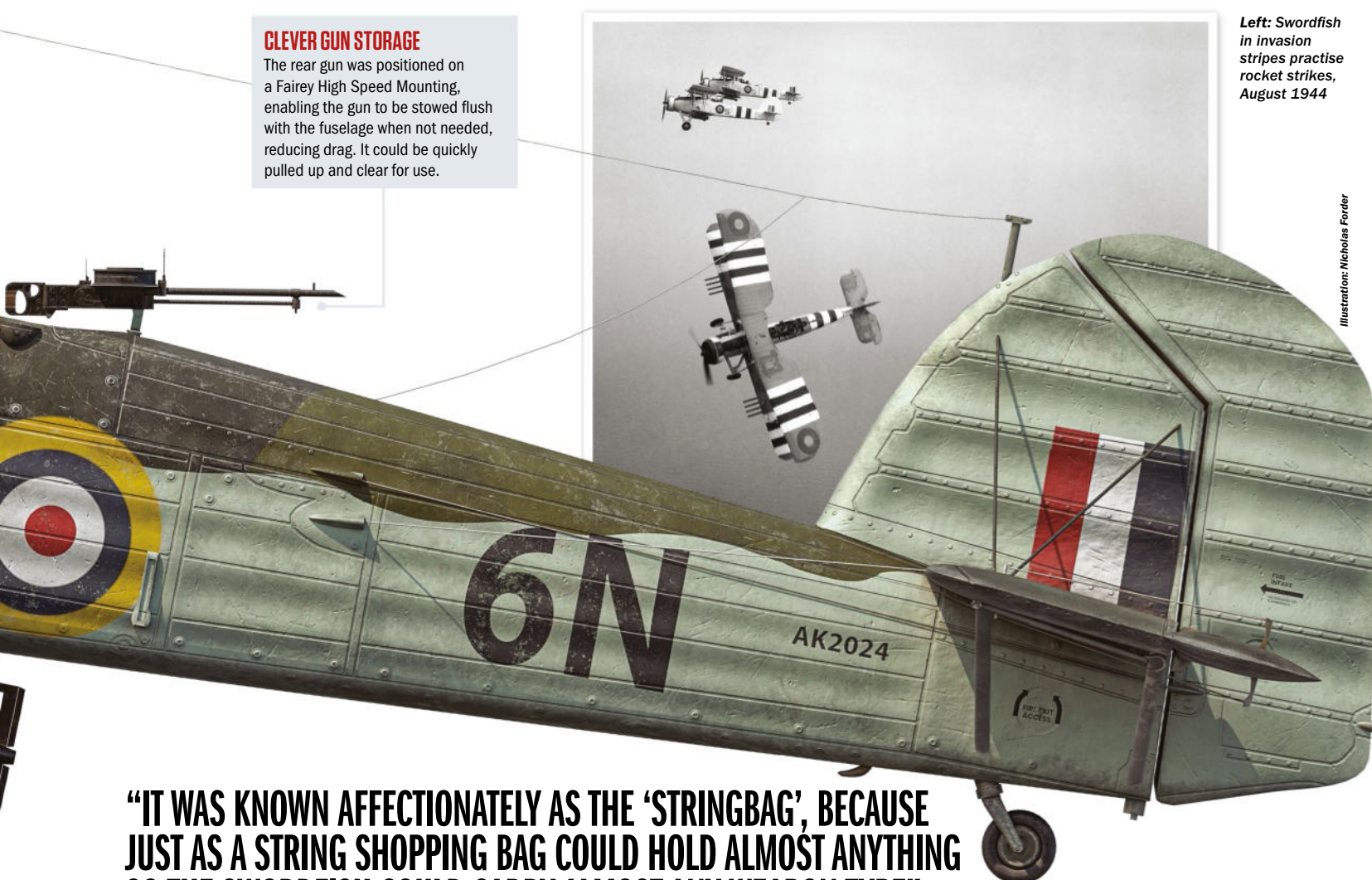
carry almost any weapon type, it would equip 13 FAA squadrons by the outbreak of the Second World War. By now, on paper at least, it was hopelessly obsolete yet a further 13 squadrons would be raised, and others serve with the RAF. The Stringbag would become one of those small number of exceptional biplanes that would survive into the beginning of the jet age. Incredibly agile and stable, with superb low-speed handling, it would take part in some of the most stunning British naval successes, and disasters, of the war, sinking or damaging several enemy battleships.

FAIREY SWORDFISH

COMMISSIONED	1933
ORIGIN	BRITISH
LENGTH	36FT 4IN (10.87M)
WINGSPAN	45FT 6IN (13.87M) OR 17FT 3IN (5.26M) FOLDED
ENGINE	1 X BRISTOL PEGASUS IIM 690HP (515KW) ROTARY ENGINE
CREW	3
PRIMARY WEAPON	1 X FORWARD FIRING 0.303IN (7.7MM) VICKERS MACHINE GUN AND 1 X 0.303IN (7.7MM) REARWARD FIRING VICKERS K OR LEWIS MACHINE GUN
SECONDARY WEAPON	1 X 18IN (46CM) TORPEDO OR 1500LB (700KG) OF BOMBS, DEPTH CHARGES, FLARES OR ROCKETS

CLEVER GUN STORAGE

The rear gun was positioned on a Fairey High Speed Mounting, enabling the gun to be stowed flush with the fuselage when not needed, reducing drag. It could be quickly pulled up and clear for use.



Left: Swordfish in invasion stripes practise rocket strikes, August 1944

Illustration: Nicholas Ford

"IT WAS KNOWN AFFECTIONATELY AS THE 'STRINGBAG', BECAUSE JUST AS A STRING SHOPPING BAG COULD HOLD ALMOST ANYTHING SO THE SWORDFISH COULD CARRY ALMOST ANY WEAPON TYPE"

ARMAMENT

The pilot had a single 0.303in (7.7mm) fixed forward-firing Vickers gun, while the telegraphist/air gunner (TAG) had a single 0.303in movable gun for defence. Offensive armament consisted of an 18in (46cm) torpedo or a 1,500lb (700kg) sea mine slung under the fuselage, or up to 1,500lb of air-dropped munitions or pyrotechnics under the fuselage and outer wings. From 1943 Swordfish could also carry up to eight 60lb (27kg) rocket projectiles under the wings, with special plates fitted to protect the fabric from the flames from the propellant.



Above: A TAG mans his Vickers gun on a High Speed Mount. Four spare ammunition drums were carried



Above: Armourers fit rockets on an 834 Squadron FAA Swordfish on HMS Battler in the Mediterranean



Below: A torpedo is loaded onto a Swordfish at HMS Jackdaw, a Royal Naval Air Service station in Fife

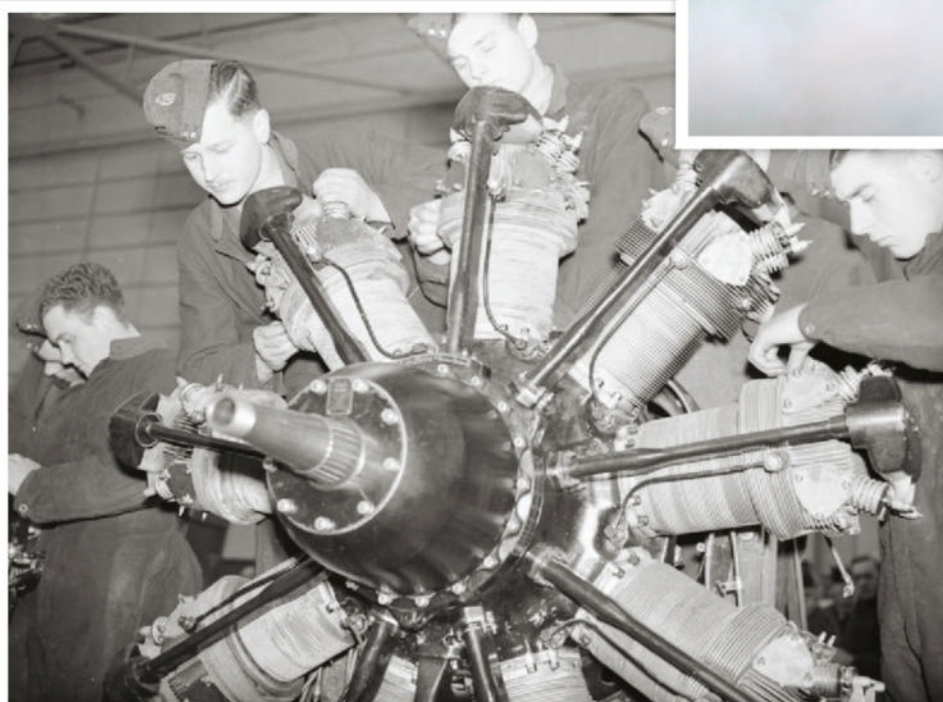
“SEVERAL DESIGN FEATURES IN THE WINGS TAILORED THE SWORDFISH FOR VERY LOW SPEED FLIGHT”



Swordfish showing the benefits of folding wings on board HMS Activity

DESIGN

With a basic structure of metal tubing, the cockpit and engine areas were metal-skinned while the rest of the aircraft was fabric-covered. It was specifically designed for aircraft carrier operations, with arrestor hook, folding wings and rugged undercarriage. Several design features in the wings tailored the Swordfish for very low speed flight, allowing its use from small escort carriers later in the war. From 1941, some aircraft were fitted with Air-to-Surface Vessel (ASV) Radar. Although outdated, the light and resilient structure gave superb handling characteristics for low-level flight, dive-bombing and operating in rough weather.



ENGINE

The Bristol Pegasus was a hugely successful family of engines. Known as 'Faithful Peggy', over 30,000 were built and they powered many of Britain's wartime aircraft. Originally designed in 1932, it was compact, reliable and was used to set numerous height and speed records in the 1930s. A radial nine-cylinder supercharged and air-cooled design, the outer rims were protected by a Townsend Ring. The models used on earlier Swordfish provided 690hp (515kW), and from the Mk III onwards 775hp (578kW) of thrust.

Above: Starting the Pegasus on the Royal Navy Historical Flight's Swordfish

Left: RAF trainees get familiar with Faithful Peggy



**“IN MAY 1941,
SWORDFISH CRIPPLED
THE STEERING OF THE
GERMAN BATTLESHIP
BISMARCK, ONE OF THE
MOST MODERN AND
POWERFUL SHIPS IN
THE WORLD, ALLOWING
SURFACE VESSELS TO
CATCH AND SINK HER”**

COCKPITS

The Fairey Swordfish's cockpits were open, with the pilot at the front and the observer and TAG sharing a compartment to the rear. While the pilot controlled flight and the forward-firing weapons, the observer aimed bombs through a hatch under the pilot's seat. He also navigated, operated the ASV Radar and could direct naval gun fire. The TAG operated the rear machine gun, but this part of the cockpit could also be used to carry auxiliary fuel tanks instead. Only the pilot had a proper seat, with the more mobile observer and TAG having to make do with rudimentary stalls and straps.

*Above: Crew area of the
Royal Navy Historical
Flight's Swordfish*

*Below: Crew loading
equipment into the rear
cockpit in North Africa*





Two Swordfish wait as HMS Fencer's decks are cleared of snow before take off in the Arctic



One of HMS Ark Royal's Swordfish returns after their historic attack on the Bismarck

SERVICE HISTORY

The Swordfish saw active service around the world. Perhaps its finest moment came in November 1940 when 21 Swordfish launched a night attack on the Italian fleet anchored in Taranto harbour. For the loss of two aircraft, three Italian battleships and five other vessels were sunk or damaged, and extensive damage was inflicted on shore facilities.

In May 1941, Swordfish crippled the steering of the German battleship Bismarck, one of the most modern

and powerful ships in the world, allowing surface vessels to catch and sink her. However, an attack on the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau as they dashed through the English Channel in February 1942 ended with an entire formation of six Swordfish lost. Their commander, Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde, was awarded the Victoria Cross.

However, the Swordfish's main role remained escort duties, spending thousands of patient hours in all weathers and climates searching for enemy submarines and surface vessels, protecting vital convoys as well as the fleet.

EXPLORE THE RICH HERITAGE OF THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

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HOME FRONT



74 BATTLE OF WAKDE

This month, 1944, a US-Australian operation launches against Japanese-held New Guinea

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Museums and events



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WWII This month



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Artefact of War:
Anti-ship missile



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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

A variety of events have been planned across Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day

D-Day Festival Normandy

A fortnight of regionally promoted festivities and remembrance will be held in June



Crowds gather at the Sherman Tank Monument to watch fireworks during the 73rd anniversary of D-Day

For more information visit: en.normandie-tourisme.fr

D-Day Festival Normandy began in 2007, aiming to inspire people to visit and commemorate the landings. The festival hosts various events throughout the area, with the Normandy Regional Tourism Committee asking each local tourist office to contribute their most important D-Day events for promotion across the region.

D-Day Festival Normandy for the 80th anniversary will run from 1 to 16 June and is set to be the greatest yet. There will be things to see along the entire D-Day coastline and much of the Normandy battleground, including parachuting, parades, concerts, historical re-enactments, fireworks and new exhibitions. These events are spread across iconic locations from Pegasus Bridge to Sainte-Mère-Eglise, including Ouistreham, Arromanches,

Pointe du Hoc and the five beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. Further festivities can be found inland.

The festival will kick off at the Omaha Beach Freedom Concert in Vierville-sur-Mer. Enjoy six hours of live entertainment based on American music culture from the 1940s to the 1970s, with breathtaking views over Omaha Beach. The event will conclude with 'L'Embrasement de la Côte' ('The Burning of the Coast') – several simultaneous firework displays along the Normandy coast.

D-Day Festival Normandy will also screen documentary films, many for the first time. Among the most hotly anticipated is *Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives*. This film draws from witness testimony of people who were children during the war and had parents or

family members in the resistance. The documentary will be screened at Dives-sur-Mer from 6 to 8 June.

Not all D-Day Festival Normandy events are open to the public. Most notably, an international memorial event, to which world leaders have been invited, is planned at Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer on 6 June. Due to the scale of this event, it is advisable to avoid travelling near Omaha Beach on that day. As detailed in the map opposite, there are dozens of other events and exhibitions held throughout Normandy to visit instead.

As D-Day Festival Normandy approaches, more information and events will be released. Visit the Normandy Regional Tourism Committee website (see above) for the full programme.

D-DAY 80 EVENTS MAP

Numerous further memorials and exhibitions will be held during D-Day Festival Normandy and beyond

CRICQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN 01

Rangers Lead the Way: an exhibition on the 2nd Ranger Battalion's assault on Pointe-du-Hoc, open 10-12 May.

VER-SUR-MER 02

An installation of 1,475 silhouettes can be found at the British Normandy Memorial throughout the summer, commemorating the British soldiers who died on D-Day.

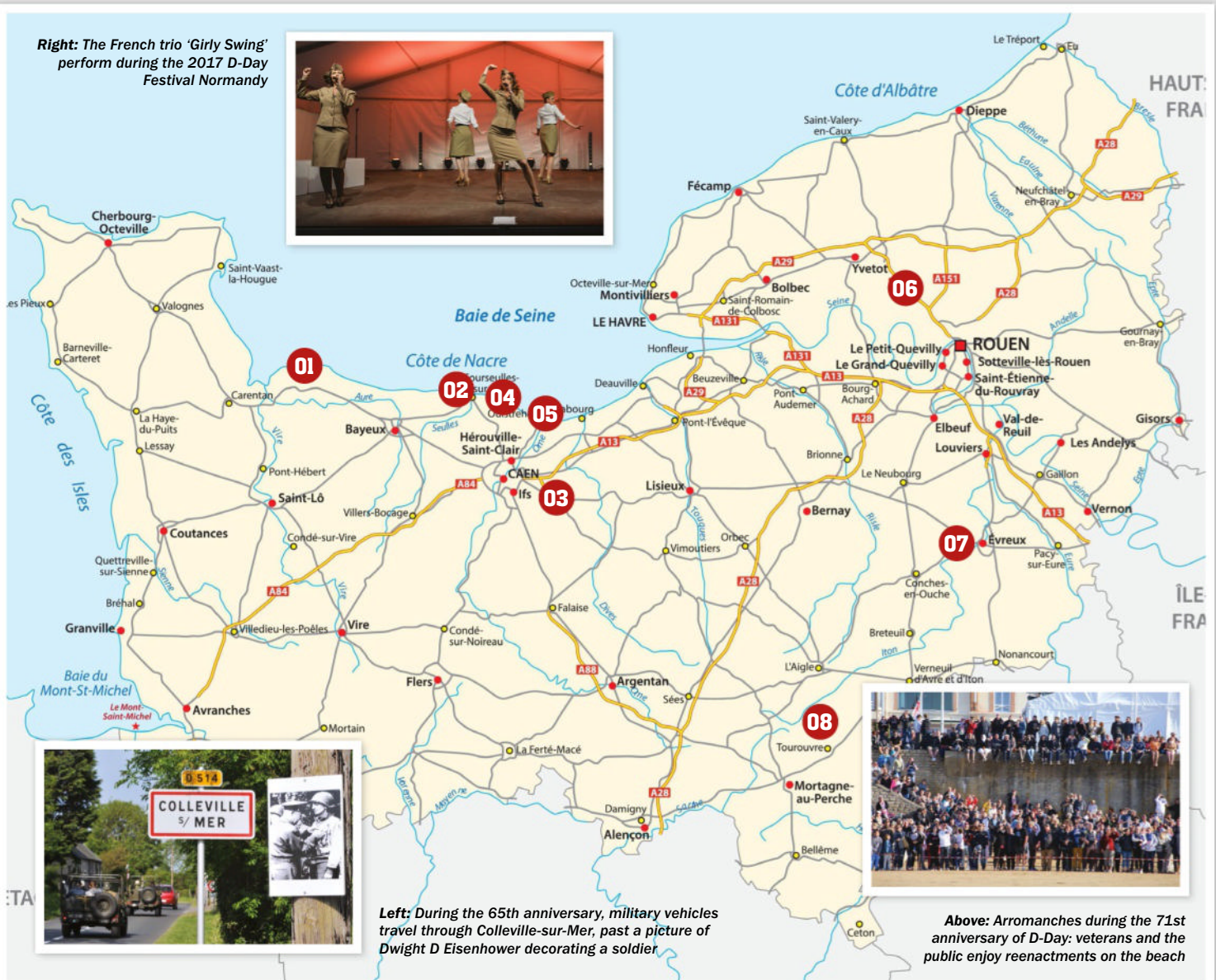
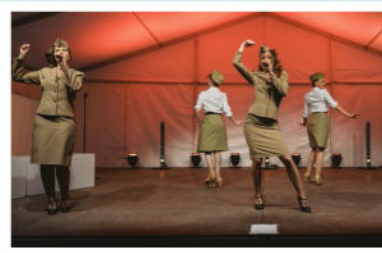
CAEN 03

D-Day Week: starting 8 June, Caen celebrates liberation with jazz concerts, vehicle parades and vintage markets with the shopkeepers in period clothing.

LUC-SUR-MER 04

Liberation Ceremony of Luc-sur-Mer: a unique parade on 7 June, including the children of the British Commandos who liberated the town.

Right: The French trio 'Girly Swing' perform during the 2017 D-Day Festival Normandy



Left: During the 65th anniversary, military vehicles travel through Colleville-sur-Mer, past a picture of Dwight D Eisenhower decorating a soldier.



Above: Arromanches during the 71st anniversary of D-Day: veterans and the public enjoy reenactments on the beach

LION-SUR-MER 05

La Normandie Célèbre La Liberté: a festival held on 9 June featuring swing balls, military vehicle exhibitions and a beach rugby match.

PAVILLY 06

Les 80 ans de la Libération de Pavilly: reenactments held over a two-day festival in Pavilly, starting 31 August. They will include a tribute to resistance fighters, military vehicle demonstrations and a boxing match.

ÉVREUX 07

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace performed by the Symphony Orchestra of the Evreux and Vernon Conservatories on 31 August.

TOUROUVRE 08

The massacre at Tourouvre is a little-known tragedy that will be remembered in a memorial mass and parade of Second World War vehicles on 13 August.

**WWII THIS MONTH...**

MAY 1944

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, History of War will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict



BATTLE OF WAKDE

From 17-21 May 1944, the US Army and Royal Australian Navy launched Operation Straight Line: the invasion of Japanese-held Dutch New Guinea. They began with the Wakde islands, located two miles (3km) off the north coast, which the US needed as a staging post and air base for heavy bombers during future operations in New Guinea. The US dispatched four companies (1,500 men) to take on the 800 Japanese troops defending the island, and they soon captured the beach and airfield, assisted by close air support from Douglas A-20 Havoc aircraft. However, Japanese snipers in concealed positions prevented the island from being fully secured until 26 May.



The first wave of US infantrymen race onto the beach from their Higgins boats during the invasion of Wakde



Two US troops take cover in a Japanese pillbox after forcing the Japanese defenders to flee hours previously

SIEGE OF MYITKYINA

During the campaign to open the Ledo Road in North Burma, connecting India to China, the US and China fought in the Siege of Myitkyina against Japan. The siege began at 10pm during the incessant rain of 17 May 1944 when Allied forces launched a surprise attack against the Myitkyina airstrip. It was an immediate success, with eight Japanese planes quickly destroyed. Yet the Allies struggled during the next assault, on Myitkyina town, and it took a British attack under the command of Mike Calvert to break supply lines and weaken the Japanese. On 3 August, General Genzo Mizukami ordered the Japanese forces to abandon the town, then took his own life.



EVACUATION OF CRIMEA COMPLETED

The Crimean Offensive ended with the final phase of evacuation, running from 10-14 May 1944, featuring the fiercest combat of the battle. Axis ships transported over 30,000 German and Romanian troops out of the region, under constant attack from Soviet aircraft and artillery positions on the shore. The mine-laying destroyer escort Amiral Murgescu was the last ship to leave, carrying 1,000 troops, including the German General Walter Hartmann.

A depiction of the last Wehrmacht men evacuated from Crimea, on display at the Black Sea Fleet Museum in Sevastopol



OPERATION STEINBOCK CALLED OFF

Operation Steinbock, also referred to as the Baby Blitz, was the Luftwaffe's final strategic bombing campaign against England, ending on 29 May 1944. It was devised as retaliation for Allied Bomber Command's increasingly effective campaign against German cities, using 474 bombers to score what the Nazis hoped would be a propaganda victory. The operation was a disaster, with 70 percent of planes destroyed, at a rate of 77 a month. Eventually, Operation Steinbock was halted and the weakened Luftwaffe no longer posed a threat to the upcoming Normandy landings.



No 96 Squadron de Havilland Mosquito crewmen survey the wreckage of a Junkers Ju 88 that they had shot down during the night

WEST LOCH DISASTER

During the preparations for Operation Forager, the offensive on Japanese bases in the Central Pacific, Landing Ships, Tank (LST) amphibious assault ships were being loaded in West Loch, Pearl Harbor. A mortar round accidentally detonated aboard LST-353. The 29 nearby LSTs were all fully loaded with munitions, and the burning debris sparked further explosions on other ships in a deadly chain reaction. Six LSTs sank, and the disaster killed 163 men and wounded nearly 400. An investigation by the Naval Board of Inquiry found that the men loading the mortar rounds had received no training in handling high explosives. In the following months, the US Navy overhauled its ordnance-handling procedures to improve safety.

Two men watch as smoke rises from LST-39, which later sank



REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books, TV and film

MASTERS OF THE AIR

A STUNNING TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT, BUT HAVEN'T WE SEEN THESE STORIES BEFORE?

Creator: John Orloff **Starring:** Austin Butler, Callum Turner, Anthony Boyle **Released:** Out now on Apple TV+

Adding to their Second World War shows *Band Of Brothers* and *The Pacific*, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks have been reunited as producers for this Apple TV+ series *Masters Of The Air*. This is the story of the 100th Bomb Group, the American Flying Fortress heavy bombers, stationed in England during the war, who took part in many daring and incredibly dangerous missions over Europe.

There are sequences here that will do for Second World War air combat what *Saving Private Ryan* did for the Normandy landings. The aerial combat sequences are tense, exhilarating, terrifying and awe-inspiring. Spielberg's involvement in *Masters Of The Air* is from the production office rather than the director's chair, and technology has clearly come a long way since his cinematic opus, but visual effects only make something possible, not good. The execution by the special effects team and directors is incredible.

As a result, it's hard not to feel a sense of excitement and dread when we join the air crews for their briefings ahead of a new mission. We have a sense of what awaits them in the skies and can't wait to see, even if it is sometimes from between our fingers.

The large cast is nicely humanised, so young yet asked to take on so much responsibility (their chief engineer is only 19). It's easy to root for them because the foibles and troubles of their daily lives are not ignored. Some suffer from debilitating air sickness, others drift alarmingly towards alcoholism. There are even those who seem to be addicted to the risk and the adrenaline rush of the next mission. *Masters Of The Air* does an excellent job of taking those young men in flight suits in black and white photos and revealing their relatability.

It's a shame, then, that the show is otherwise a little pedestrian and familiar. Another mission comes along and not everyone comes home, there's some domestic drama, the American and British airmen don't always

get along, and so on. It's all a little predictable and with such a large cast, trying to tell so many stories, it can sometimes feel like the show is stretching itself too thin.

One example is the side thread of Sergeant William Quinn (Kai Alexander), who has to parachute from his stricken plane and finds himself behind enemy lines in Belgium, working with the local resistance to escape. This thread carries a requisite amount of threat and a quieter sort of tension from the battle sequences. Still, it's the kind of story we've seen depicted elsewhere; it doesn't bring much new to the table and coming back to it periodically as we do, it can feel like we're being pulled around a little too much.

It feels a little reductive to call out a Second World War show for not being original enough. This is solid storytelling with much to admire in terms of production design and effects. The story keeps things moving and holds it together, but doesn't necessarily offer the depth of its predecessors. **JG**



Austin Butler plays Major Gale 'Buck' Clevener in this series about 100th Bomb Group



Sergeant William Quinn (Kai Alexander) is shot down behind enemy lines



The series depicts the terror of Allied bombing raids over Europe

THE DISAPPEARED

Author: Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc **Publisher:** Merrion Press

Price: £18.99 (Paperback) **Released:** Out now

THE HISTORY OF THE DISAPPEARED IN IRELAND AND THE IDENTITIES OF THE VICTIMS, FROM THE NORTH KING STREET MASSACRE IN 1916 TO EVENTS IN 2003

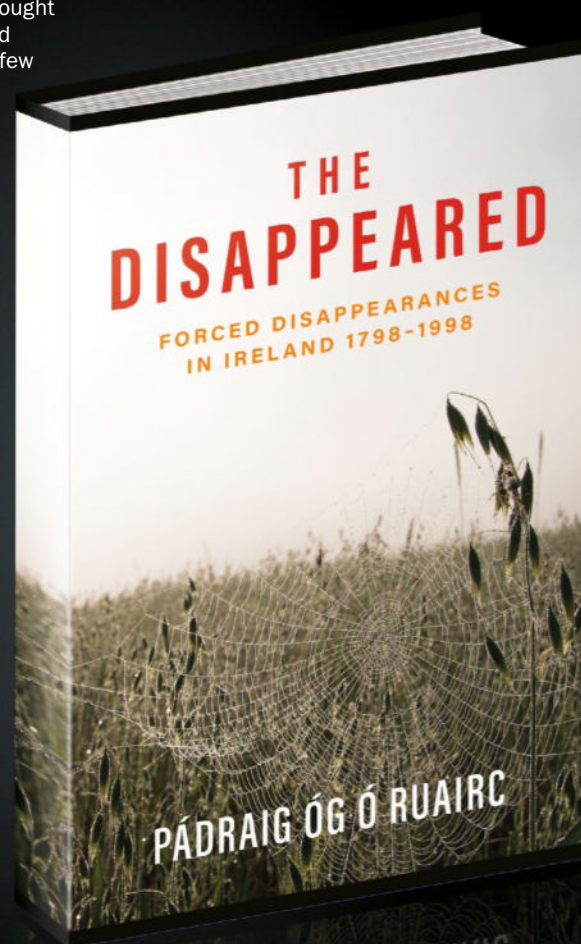
The spectre of people abducted, executed and buried in remote locations has overshadowed the debate around the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland for the past two decades. The tragic and, needless to say, controversial story begins with the North King Street Massacre of 17 civilians by the British Army in 1916. This tragic incident was carried out in reprisal for the deaths of their comrades during the Rising of that year. This stands as the largest massacre of civilians in modern Irish history. Author Ó Ruairc's meticulous research takes the reader beyond the headlines and clichés to dig deep into the background of events.

The narrative reveals some surprising historical facts. For instance, despite the bitterness of the civil war fought between the anti-Treaty IRA and the Free State Army, relatively few people vanished during this conflict compared with the earlier 1919-22 War of Independence. A source of lingering bitterness, along with the killings themselves, was the British government's refusal to

release the bodies of IRA Volunteers who had been court-martialed and executed by the army.

The book provides often shocking details of the men taken away from their families, some never to be seen again. For instance, Brendan Megraw was abducted from his home, in the presence of his wife, by Provisional IRA Volunteers in 1978. His body was not discovered until 2014.

The Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains (ICLVR) was set up in 1999 by the UK and Irish governments to locate missing Irish and British people. It is a daunting task: of the approximately 170 people disappeared across Ireland in the 20th century, 60 remain missing. **JS**



“THE BOOK PROVIDES OFTEN SHOCKING DETAILS OF THE MEN TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES, SOME NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN”



THE SHAMROCK SPITFIRE

HOW A PUGNACIOUS YOUNG IRISHMAN OVERCAME THE ODDS TO BECOME A FIGHTER ACE

Directors: Dominic Higgins, Ian Higgins **Starring:** Shane O'Regan, Jamie B Chambers, Sophia Eleni **Released:** Out now

This recently released film from the renowned writer-director brothers Dominic and Ian Higgins tells the remarkable story of one the RAF's leading 'aces' of the Second World War: Wing Commander Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane.

With the leading role taken by Shane O'Regan, the story chronicles the real-life challenges of a young man from an Irish Republican family to enlist in the pre-war RAF, apply for a short service commission in 1938, learn to fly, and then to go on to fly Spitfires during the Battle of Britain.

The film faithfully tells the story of those challenges and hurdles and dramatically portrays how Finucane started to rack up an impressive score of aerial victories during the Battle of Britain while serving with 65 Squadron at RAF Hornchurch. It was here that he honed his air-fighting skills and an aggressive spirit that is explicitly set out from the film's very outset where, as a young boy, he is seen being inspired by reading of the exploits of an Irish fighter ace in the First World War, 'Mick' Mannock. His 'fighting Irish spirit' is also seen being encouraged by his Republican-



sympathising father, who eventually warms to his son's service to the Crown.

The characters portrayed in the film are largely based on real-life individuals – especially the pilots of 452 (Australian) Squadron, RAAF, where Finucane becomes a flight commander in April 1941 when flying from RAF Kenley. Among the pilots with whom he forms a special bond is the ebullient Australian 'Bluey' Truscott – the pair soon building up an impressive score of victories, with the very first squadron victory being scored by Finucane in July.

Eventually given command of his own squadron, where he was also wounded in a dogfight, Finucane became wing leader of the Hornchurch fighter wing and, at 22, the youngest wing commander in the RAF. It was in this role during the summer of 1942 that he was shot down over the French coast and crashed in the English Channel. No trace of him was ever found.

The film is a reasonably accurate portrayal of his story and uses 'borrowed' clips from other films such as *Battle of Britain*, but understandably relies on a degree of CGI for the aerial scenes. Nevertheless, pretty good attention to detail is given to uniforms and flying equipment (if not always in the manner it is worn!) and even, mostly, to the depiction of correct squadron code letters on the Spitfires. That attention to detail extends to a scene in Finucane's office where an emblem used as a trophy decorates the wall – exactly as it does in a period photo of Finucane at his desk!

All in all, this is a charming if not slightly whimsical film that tells the little-known tale of this Irish ace and brings his inspiring story into the spotlight. Well-made on a limited budget, it is certainly well worth a watch. **AS**



ALL ABOUT
HISTORY RECOMMENDS

THE SETTLERS

A DARK AND OVERLOOKED HISTORY LIES AT THE HEART OF THIS HARD-HITTING CHILEAN TAKE ON THE WESTERN

Director: Felipe Gálvez **Starring:** Mark Stanley, Camilo Arancibia, Benjamín Westfall **Released:** Out now

The highly publicised but often exaggerated battleground between the historian and filmmaker – one with an absolutist eye for accuracy, the other with an insatiable appetite for drama – has seemingly never been more divisive than in recent times. While some big-budget flicks have made loud forays across this well-worn terrain, others take the subtler revisionist's route, brilliantly unravelling and reintroducing a history we thought we understood, like *The Settlers* (*Los Colonos*).

The film begins in Chile, 1901. Former British soldier Lieutenant Alexander MacLennan (Mark Stanley) is tasked by a landowner to find a route across the unforgiving landscape of Tierra del Fuego, an archipelago at the country's southernmost point. With him is an American mercenary, Bill (Benjamín Westfall), and Segundo (Camilo Arancibia), a mixed-race Chilean. However, the journey turns into a bloodthirsty hunt for native Chileans, called the Ona. Bill, experienced in hunting Comanches in North America, leads a murderous surprise attack on a group of Ona, while Segundo holds back, horrified by the onslaught. Eventually reaching their destination – at the 'end of the Earth' as a large, ominous, red subtitle reads – MacLennan and the group learn that their own brutality can be meted back upon them.

In a short running time of just over 1.5 hours, debutant director Felipe Gálvez opens up a world, and a story, that has remained at the far fringes of Chile's history. As we discover, it is a history that has been quietly concealed. The dark heart of Gálvez's narrative is the genocide of the indigenous Selk'nam people during the late 19th and early 20th century. Gálvez has discussed how Segundo, based on a real figure, represents the plight of mixed-race Chileans, many of whom were the victims of, but also sometimes participants in, the violent process of colonisation.

So to say that *The Settlers* is a thousand miles away from the gun-slinging heroics of the Old West would be an understatement, but it's also revising the historical narrative of the European as the sole coloniser in South America. Gálvez re-paints this past with a grisly and gut-punching realism. Pacing, cinematography and even Harry Allouche's score all create an eerie, discomfiting tension, which for many will rhyme with Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood* (2007). Meanwhile, the film's poignant epilogue confronts us with the stark and equally discomfiting lie, lingering within the story of a nation's birth. **TW**



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Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com

Senior Designer **Curtis Fermoer-Dunman**

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Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Staff Writer **Louis Hardiman**

Contributors

John Beales, Alex Bowers, Duncan Evans, Jonathan Gordon,
Stuart Hadaway, Andrew Saunders, Jules Stewart, Michael
G Stroud

Photography

Alamy, Rocio Espín Piñar, Nicholas Forder, Getty
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Advertising

Media packs are available on request

UK Commercial Director **Clare Dove**

clare.dove@futurenet.com

Advertising Sales Director **Lara Jaggon**

lara.jaggon@futurenet.com

07515 961911

Account Manager **Jagdeep Maan**

jagdeep.maan@futurenet.com

0330 390 6532

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A Heinkel He 177 bomber launches an Hs 293 glide bomb

HENSCHEL HS 293

The first operational anti-ship missile terrorised Allied vessels during WWII

Development of a prototype glide bomb began in May 1940 under the supervision of Dr Herbert A Wagner. Based on the 1,102lb (500kg) general-purpose bomb, the glide bomb would allow German bombers to strike lightly armoured ships and merchant vessels while remaining out of range of anti-aircraft fire. A rocket motor was added in December 1940 to provide 1,323lb (600kg) of thrust for ten seconds: enough to propel the released bomb into the line of sight of the bombardier in the nose of the aircraft. The bombardier used a joystick to control the ailerons and elevator during the glide phase. As the pilot maintained a level flight parallel to the target, the bombardier would manoeuvre the glide bomb until impact with the enemy ship. Flares were later added to make tracking the missile's flight easier.

After extensive testing, the Luftwaffe deployed the Hs 293 on aircraft in the Bay of Biscay in the summer of 1943. The Hs 293 scored its first hit on the sloop HMS Bideford, but the warhead failed to detonate. Two days later, on 27 August, HMS Egret became the first vessel to be sunk by an Air-to-Surface Missile (ASM) after being targeted by a squadron of Dornier DO 217s carrying the Hs 293. This led to anti-U-boat patrols being temporarily suspended.

In total, 2,300 Hs 293s were fired in anger, sinking or damaging 25 vessels, including four British destroyers. They began to lose effectiveness as the Allies developed

radio jamming counter-measures following the capture of an intact Hs 293 and radio transmitter components on a downed Heinkel HE 177. In response, Germany began to develop wire- and screen-guided missiles but failed to make these operational before the end of the war. The Hs 293 saw its final significant use during the Normandy Campaign in 1944 and later in Poland, making history once more as the first stand-off glide bomb used against land targets. The Luftwaffe

hoped to destroy bridges to slow the Allied advance, with limited success.

Dr Harry Raffal, head of collections and research at the Royal Air Force Museum, says: "The RAF Museum's Hs 293 helps us to tell the story of how effective air power was in the war at sea. In doing so, our audience can then better understand why it was so essential that RAF fighters helped protect the Royal Navy and the vital need for air superiority not only over land but also at sea."



This Hs 293 guided bomb is on display at the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands

ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM



The Hs 293 is held in Hangar 1 at the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, located next to RAF Cosford. Entrance is free, although you will need to book an entry time online in advance of your visit. You can also purchase a guide book and parking online for a discounted price.

For more information, visit rafmuseum.org.uk

Images: Alamy, Royal Air Force Museum

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